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ImagineFX

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GET FUNDED ON KICKSTARTER

Loish, Iris Compiet and more reveal their secrets!

"Gesture is at the heart of every figure drawing"
See page 60

GET BETTER AT ANATOMY

24 unmissable tips on figure and form with **Stan Prokopenko**

PLUS!

TIPS AND ADVICE FOR SKETCHING CHARCOAL & SCULPTING

LEGEND!

JULIE BELL

We speak with one of fantasy art's finest stars

INSIDE

GREYSCALE TO COLOUR SKILLS IN PHOTOSHOP

BOB EGGLETON SHOWS US AROUND HIS STUDIO

YOUR TRADITIONAL & DIGITAL ART GALLERY

FUTURE
ISSUE 158

PHOTOSHOP SKILLS! PAINT DRAMATIC LIGHT & SHADOW ON YOUR PORTRAITS

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Welcome to…

ImagineFX

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

Every month, when putting the pages of this magazine together, I usually get to a point where it seems unlikely that it'll happen. I worry. I worry that I won't be able to find enough artists, or words. Every contributor misses their deadline and I'm left with lots of blank pages to fill.

But despite my relentless catastrophising, everything somehow comes together in the end. Every month, as sure as day follows night, I find new artists and workshops, people make their deadlines (hurrah!) and the printer has never had to phone and ask where the heck the magazine is.

As artists and creators it's imperative that we question ourselves and listen to our inner critic, but if there's always a point in your art creation where you spend more time worrying about what can go wrong than right, then maybe it's time to think about what can be done to combat this.

Sadly, I'm not about to sum up a solution to this conundrum, but I thought I'd share something I'm trying to work on in my own life. I want to turn down the volume on the negative feelings and crank up those positive notions. If you have any thoughts on this, I'd love to hear from you.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

EDITOR'S CHOICE Three of my top picks this month...

New UK event for 3D artists!
There's a fantastic new event for the 3D art community and the list of speakers is phenomenal. Go see!

The art of Julie Bell
I've always admired Julie's art, so it was a pleasure to find out more about the person behind the pictures.

The miniaturist
This issue we're honoured to feature the creations of Romain Van den Bogaert, a talented sculptor.

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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

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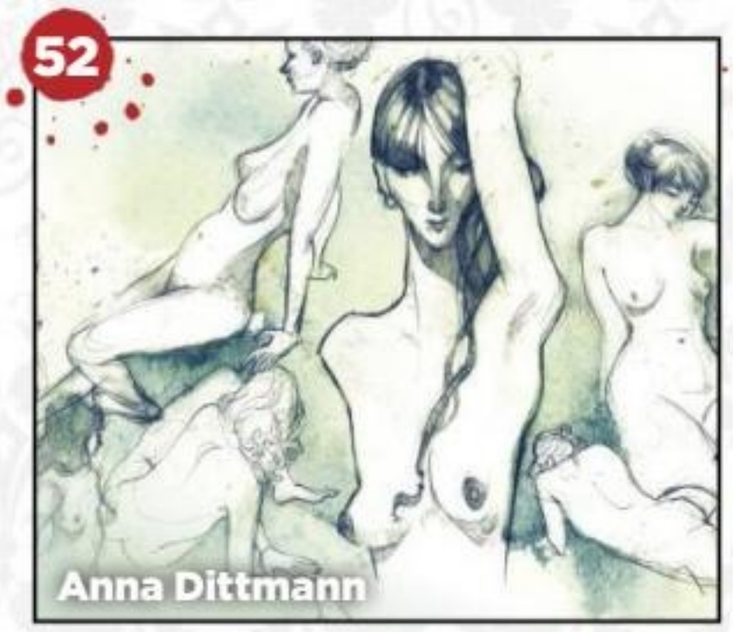

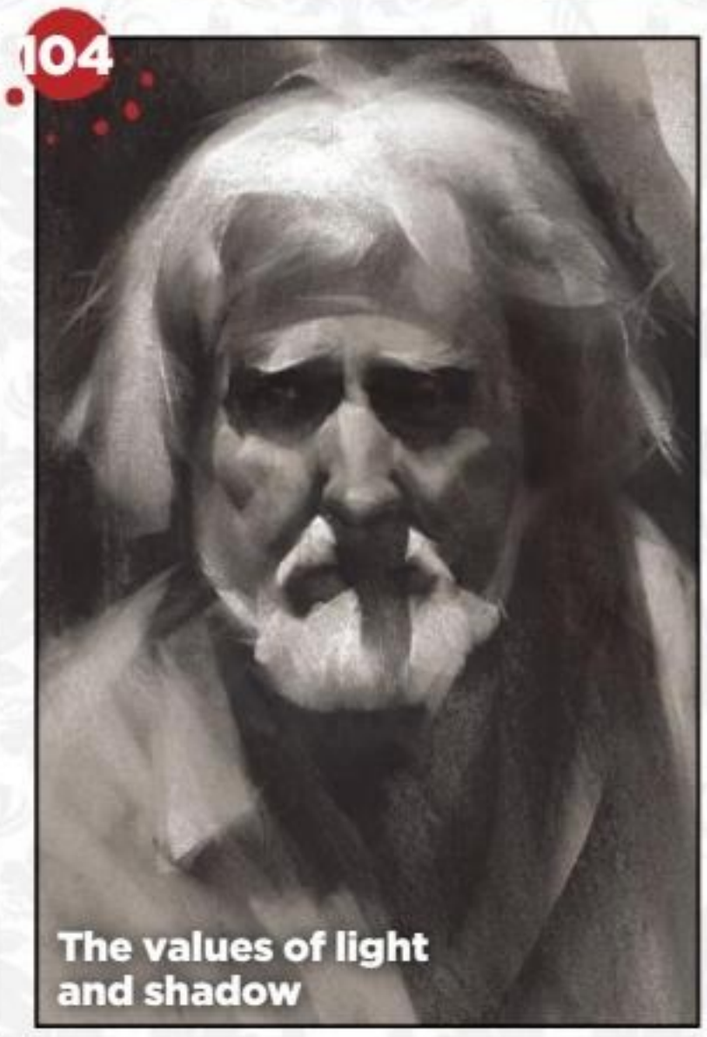

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Luisa Preissler maximises the sense of atmosphere and intrigue in a portrait.

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We showcase the best art created using traditional methods, sent in by you!

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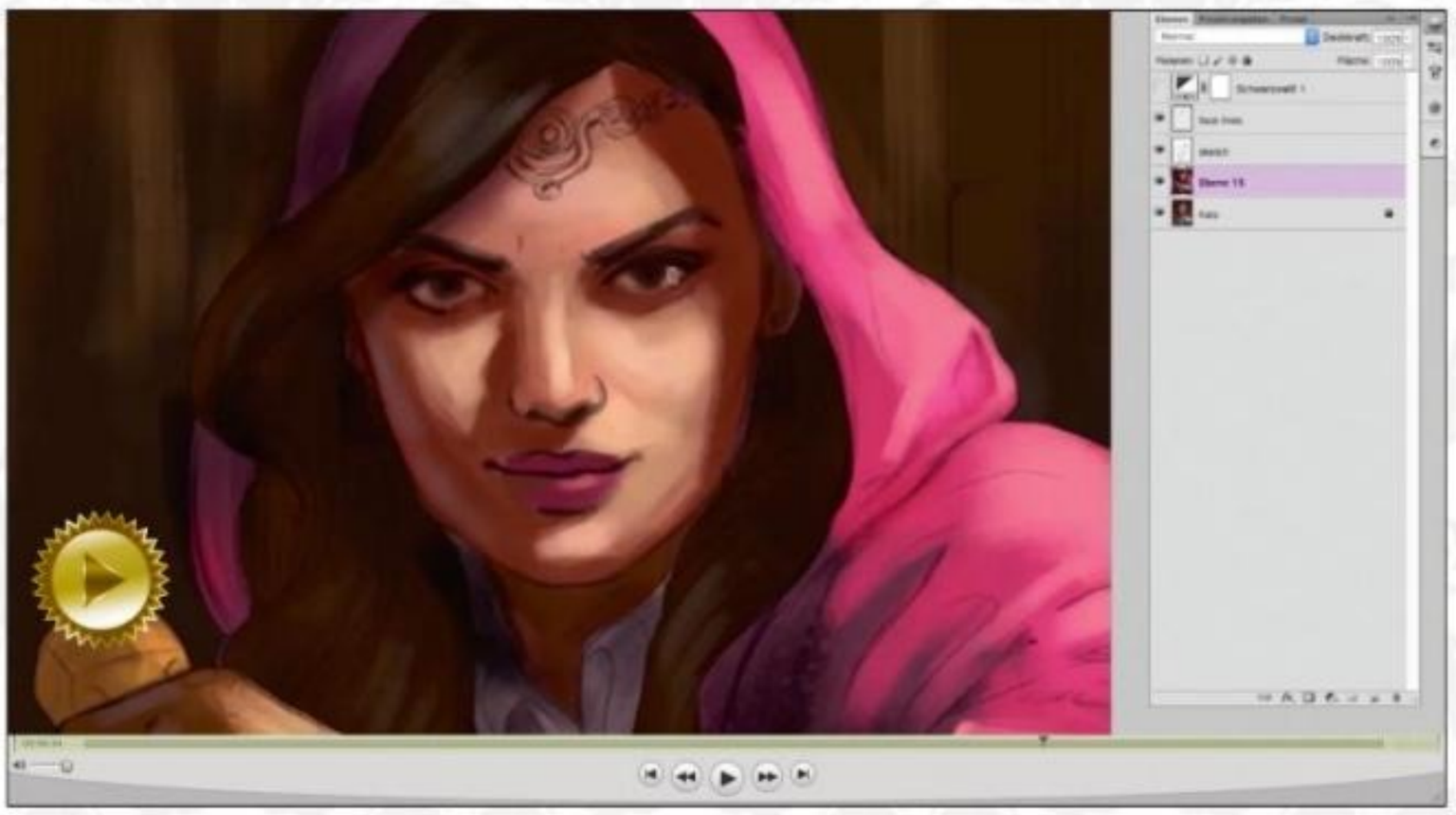
This artist's childhood has repercussions.

ImagineFX Resources

Getting hold of this issue's videos and custom brushes is easy. Just visit **http://ifxm.ag/master158anatomy**

Take your greyscale artwork to full colour

Watch how Stephan McGowan adds colour to the mix in Photoshop, then turn to page 72.



Discover how to paint dramatic light and shadows

A hooded figure comes to life in Luisa Preissler's video. Her workshop on page 80 is a must-read.

PLUS 5 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

SQUARE TEXTURE
Here's one of Ilse Gort's custom brushes, which she uses to give her artwork a traditional feel.

PAINT SOFT
Luisa Preissler uses this brush in her character work, for painting smooth transitions between skin tones.

LEATHER
As the name of this brush suggests, Luisa applies this brush to add grainy texture to leather materials.

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FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

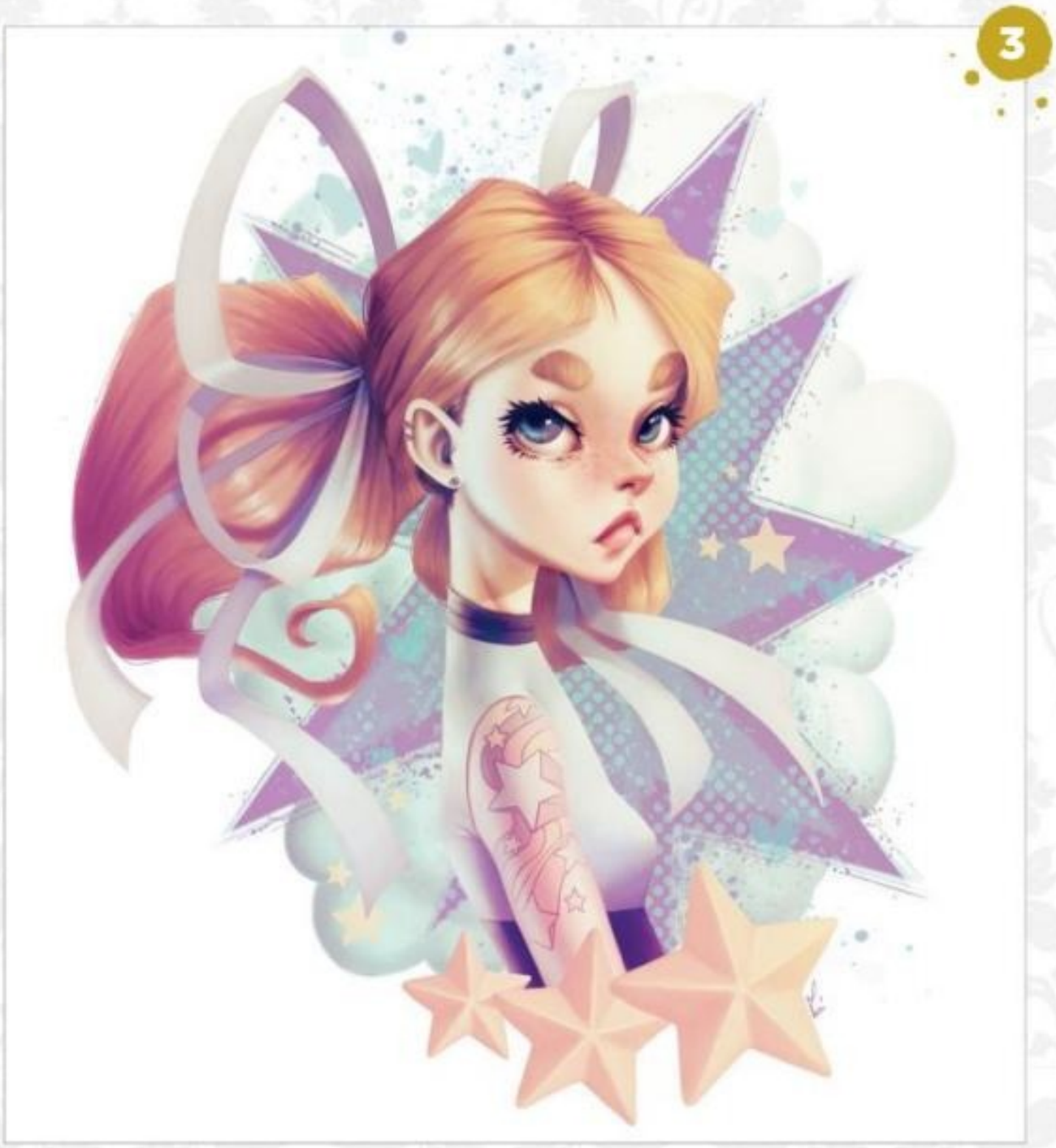
ImagineFX ARTIST of the MONTH

Małgorzata Kmieć

LOCATION: Germany **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.mkmiec-art.com

Małgorzata specialises in stylised and colourful portraits. She believes anyone who thinks magic doesn't exist has never heard of art, and aims to put a bit of magic into all her work.

1



1 SPRING SPIRIT
"I'm often inspired by seasons and nature, and this painting is a tribute to early spring. I wanted to surround my character with warm colours that reflect the spirit of the season."

2 DEEP SKY
"This painting was pretty challenging and required a fair bit of work. I was keen to incorporate strong colours, but still keep my character as the focal point."

3 BOWS AND HEARTS
"Grumpy girls are definitely a favourite subject of mine. While working on this piece I allowed myself to experiment with style and colour."

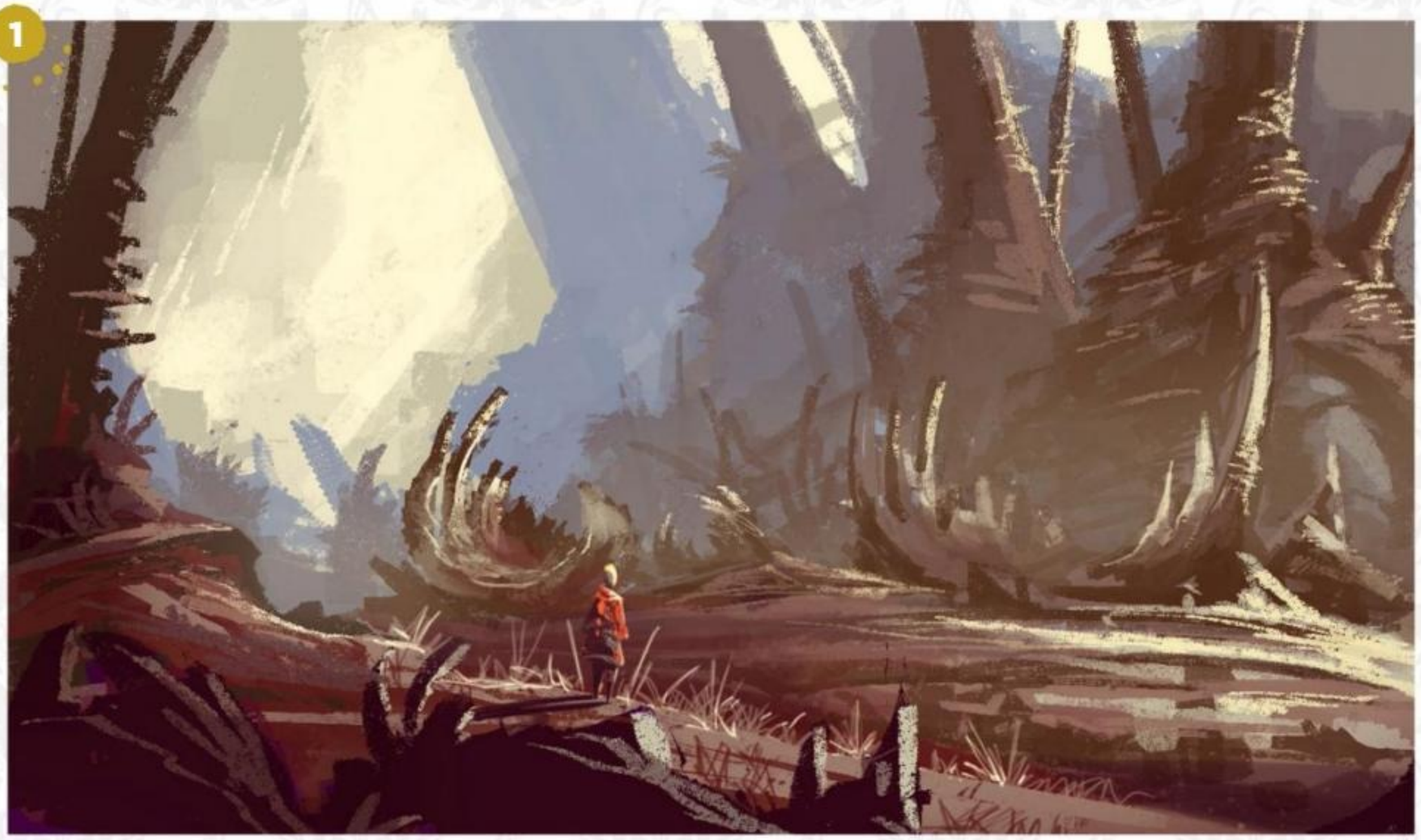
4 STARS AND BOLTS
"All my paintings are experiments of sorts, and this one is no different. I enjoy exploring the various possibilities that digital tools have to offer."

Boris Stoyanov

LOCATION: Bulgaria **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.behance.net/Crowling

Boris started drawing when he was 19 and has been trying to make up for lost time ever since. He's currently a background artist at Studio Zmei, a small animation and design studio, working on its first pilot episode.

1



1 REMNANTS
"The first in a set of speed paintings I did, in which I focused on composition, interesting elements and colour. I wanted to bring in plenty of detail, but also suggest a deeper story."

2 HALLOWEEN
"This is a drawing I did recently, just for fun. I wanted to explore a more fluid and colourful art style. Although I mostly enjoy working with bigger, blockier shapes, it's always fun to experiment with line work."

3 DEATH KNIGHT
"This was inspired by the Dark Souls franchise. I wanted to see how close I could get to its dark fantasy style, and suggest a violent nature for the character."

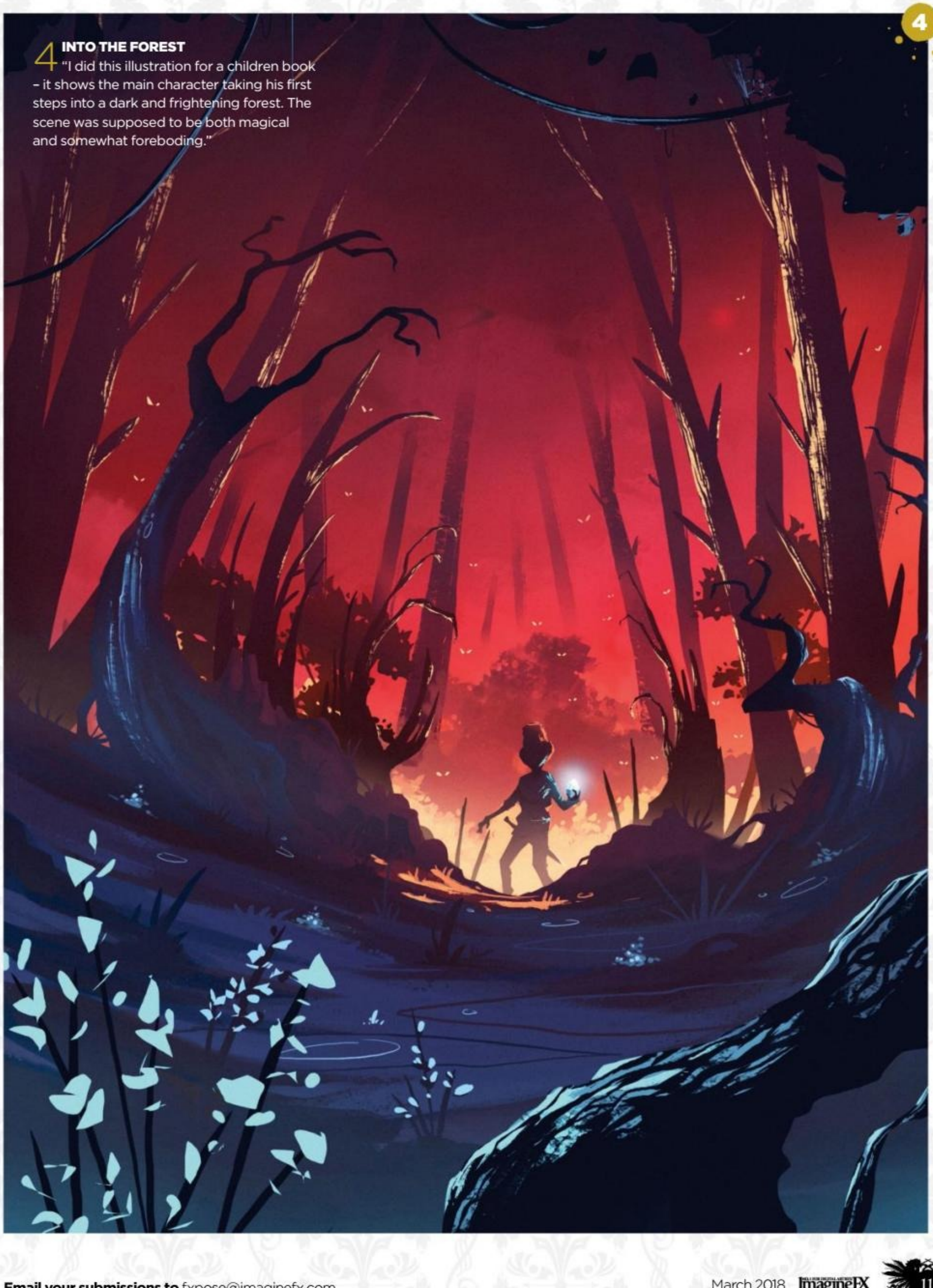
2

3

4

4 INTO THE FOREST

"I did this illustration for a children book – it shows the main character taking his first steps into a dark and frightening forest. The scene was supposed to be both magical and somewhat foreboding."



Simone Mändl

LOCATION: Germany **MEDIA:** Photoshop, 3ds Max, Unity **WEB:** www.simonemaendl.com

Simone is a freelance concept designer and art director working on independent game projects. "Indie games may not be the most financially stable field, but it's one of the most rewarding."

1

2

3

1 CUBIVERSE: MAGMA CUBE, EASTER CUBE, SCREENSHOT

"Cubiverse is a puzzle game for mobile devices; this concept art explores all the cube-shaped planets in the game. I developed a modular 2D file in Photoshop that gave me an empty cube I could work with."

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com

2 SILENT CITY

"This is a concept piece for a game that I'm working on. My goal was to figure out the environment this civilisation used, as well as depicting the state it's in when the heroes find it."

3 CARL'S SPACE ADVENTURE

"This piece was the inspiration for my Inktober drawings from last year. I came up with the stupid astronaut Carl (seen in this painting) and so for Inktober I illustrated his dumb adventures traditionally."

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com

FXPosé

1

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com

Amélie Hutt

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.apcomic.com

"I long to connect with people on a deeper level," says Amélie of her story-filled art. "I've spent decades crafting fantastic worlds to explore and heartfelt characters to interact with."

2

1 THE GRAÏNNE

"This is a cropped version of a variant cover illustration for the printed version of my fantasy action webcomic: Angels Power. It will now be an exclusive collector's item."

2 WINGED HUG

"A chapter cover featuring the protagonist, Evadrion, acquainting herself with her wings. Her memories were lost and she's just regained her ability to fly."

3 AGATHRON

"An angel architect raising monumental towers on the sea. She's an original character from my graphic novel and this was made as a promotional artwork to show at conventions."

3

Leah McKay

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.leahkmckay.net

Leah is a freelance artist in the Pacific northwest, specialising in realistic painterly concept art. "My work takes inspiration from John Singer Sargent, Edgar Payne, Iain McCaig and Cynthia Sheppard," she tells us.

1

2

3

1 DESERT ROSE
"Horsemen thunder through the canyon, throwing up rocks and dust. A triangular composition adds a threatening feel and creates depth."

2 WHISPERING WINDS
"She could sense adventure in the icy air filling her lungs; the morning sun glistening on the snow. I created a sense of danger with the wolves."

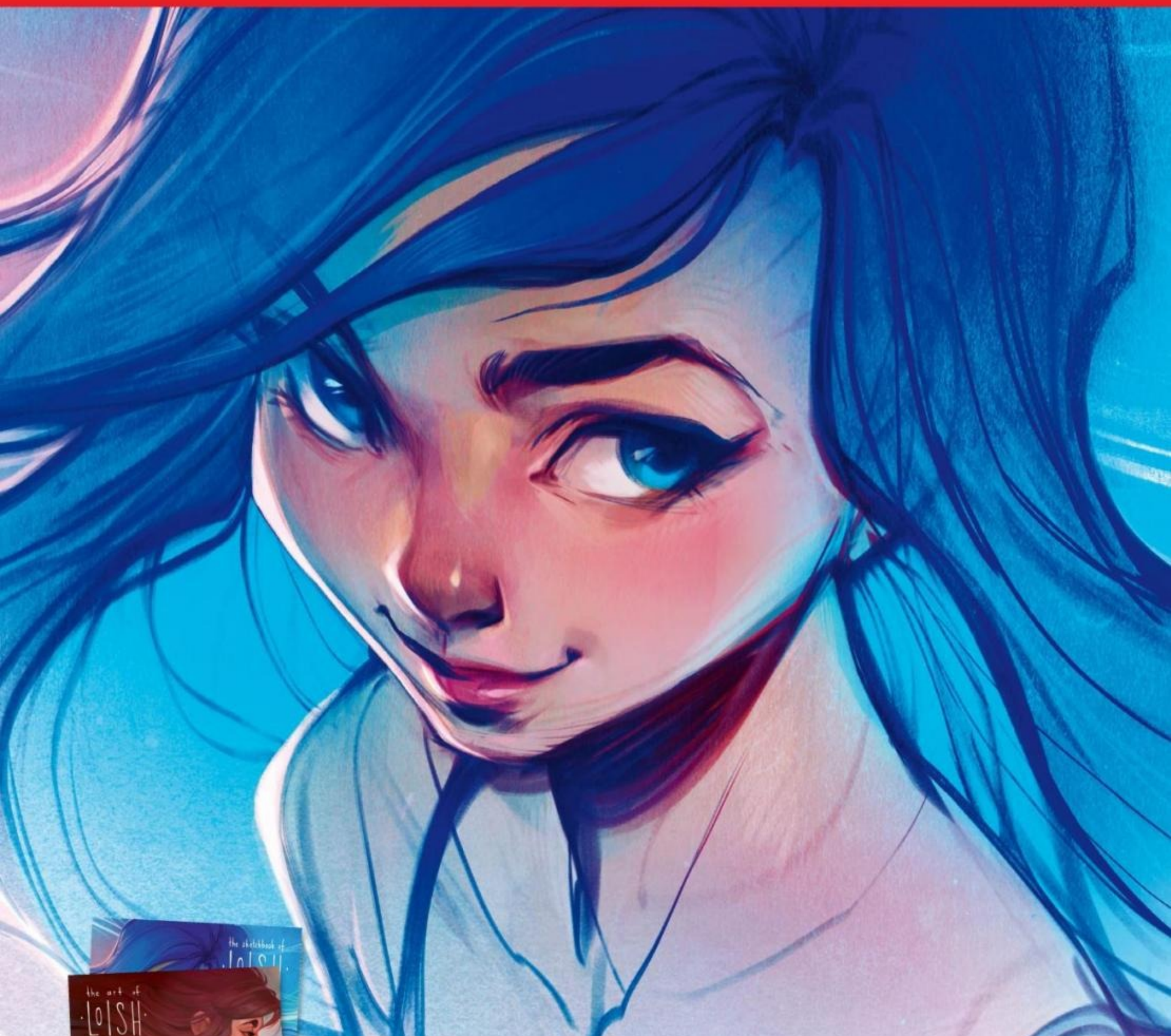
3 HONOUR
"A stoic young knight clenches his jaw as he awaits his fate. I studied the brushstroke application of John Singer Sargent for this character piece."

Do you want to see your art on these pages? Then email five pieces of your work and a short explanation about each artwork, along with a photo and a few details about yourself, to **fxpose@imaginefx.com**

4

4 A DARK REIGN
"The inspiration for this painting is Game of Thrones: the monarch is displeased. It's important to see women in positions of power in media."

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com



Lois van Baarle worked with 3D Total Publishing to crowdfund her artbooks. The division of tasks benefited both parties.

A WHOLE NEW WORLD
Discover the artists who impressed the judges of Cubebrush's WORLD challenge with their original depictions of fantasy and sci-fi environments.
Page 24

MONSTROUS COLLECTION
Fantasy beasts from the silver screen fight tooth and nail for shelf space among Bob Eggleton's enormous library of art reference books.
Page 26

VERTEX IS COMING!
3D artists of all levels and standing will want to attend this one-day conference. Plenty of industry pros will be there to pass on their techniques and advice.
Page 31

How to launch a successful Kickstarter

Helping hands **Julia Sagar** talks to a range of artists and finds out what it takes to launch and run a successful crowdfunded campaign

In September 2017, Dutch illustrator and animator Lois van Baarle launched her second crowdfunded project: The Sketchbook of Loish: Art in Progress. She smashed her £20,000 target almost instantly, eventually closing the campaign with some 10,000 backers pledging £383,404 to bring the project to life.

Lois is by no means unique. Back in June, illustrator Iris Compiet saw her Faeries of the Faultlines artbook funded within 50 minutes. It raised €111,019 before the campaign closed.

According to Kickstarter, 36 per cent of all campaigns are successful. But that means 64 per cent fail. So what's the secret to running a successful Kickstarter? And are there any pitfalls artists should avoid?

But first, check that crowdfunding is the right way to raise capital for your project. Before throwing yourself into a campaign, first ask yourself: do you have a clear goal? And do you have a compelling story to tell that will convince people to stump up the cash?

The Etchr Art Satchel builds on the success of artist Darren Yeow and business partner Simon Frisby's Nomad Art Satchel.

Iris did, on both counts. She'd been working as a graphic designer for over 16 years before she crowdfunded her first sketchbook. "I knew all about designing books," she says. "I wanted something luxurious – a book that would be amazing not only because of the art, but also how it looked. I wanted it to be a treasure in a bookcase. Only the best paper would do. I didn't want to settle for less."

Before launching both of her Kickstarter projects, Lois spent time researching other campaigns in the same field – both those that had been successful and those that hadn't. "I read a lot of blogs on running a Kickstarter, and talked to people who knew more about the process

"During the campaign I raised awareness through social media, created content for the book and made interesting promotional art," says Lois.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

IRIS COMPIET

The artist shares the secrets to her Kickstarter success

What was the biggest challenge of your Faeries of the Faultlines Kickstarter?
Keeping it manageable – there's so much you can get lost in. Also, trying to predict how well something might do, and how much will need to be sent internationally, is tricky. These things inflate your funding goal so much, you think you'll never be able to raise enough.

Why do you think you reached your target so quickly?
I think people were really looking forward to the launch. As soon as I knew the title, I used it everywhere. Every day I posted about it: a little sketch, a snippet of a story. Also, so many lovely artists and friends shared the campaign after it launched.

What are the biggest pitfalls an artist has to watch out for?
Underestimating costs and underselling your items. It's a full-time job – many people told me, but I didn't listen and took on client jobs, which meant I overworked myself. All of this can be avoided with planning and having one or more people backing you up.

If you could give one insider tip, what would it be?
Take your time, don't rush it. All your backers are your clients: you give them the best product for their money. Make this experience one they want to repeat and make it easy for yourself by doing the research. Don't leave anything to chance.

A range of bundles from Dutch artist Iris' Faeries of the Faultlines Kickstarter are still available at PledgeManager.

http://ifxm.ag/pledge-faeries

Illustrator Marty Abel tested the Etchr art satchel, providing feedback and helping generate buzz ahead of the Kickstarter launch.

than I did," **Lois** says. "I also started promotion ahead of time. It's advised to start at least three months before launch, but I started a year in advance. I worked on it almost every day for 12 months."

Simon Frisby agrees that adequate preparation and pre-marketing is key to a good Kickstarter project. He launched the wildly successful Nomad Art Satchel with concept artist Darren Yeow a few years ago. In September 2017 the pair launched two further Kickstarter products: The Etchr Art Satchel and Field Case.

The Sketchbook of Loish features tips and advice from the artist, as well as sketches and artwork.

> **Be prepared to be working non-stop, answering emails, posting about your project daily… it's a full-time job**

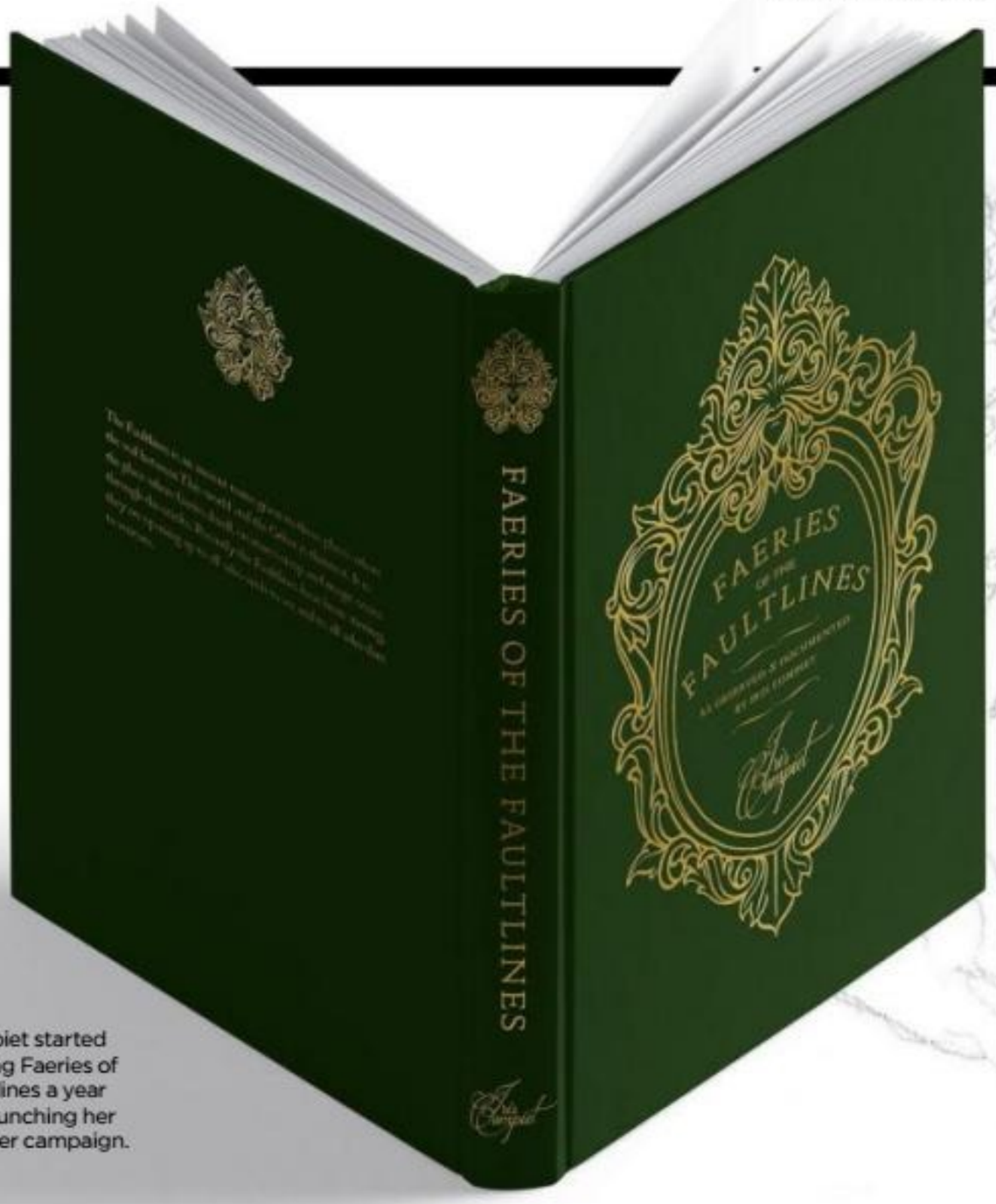
BUILD SOME BUZZ

"If your project doesn't have a bumper first day or two, then you're fighting an uphill battle," says **Simon**. "We spent a good six months showing iterations of our new products on social media and blog posts, gathering feedback from the art community and building our mailing list," he recalls. "We even spent time making memes and doing other unconventional things to offer value beyond saying 'Hey, buy our bag!', which can be kind of annoying."

Darren and Simon also sent prototypes to leading artists and YouTubers, asking them to review the products and provide feedback. "This pre-launch buzz-building is crucial because if you have a good first few days then that momentum can really erupt as 'social proof', and you can quickly push past your funding goal as people see your campaign as a winner. I believe we funded our $30k goal in about four minutes," he says.

"If we did it all again," he adds, "we would have more early bird specials to avoid disappointment – we just didn't expect them to go so quickly. We'd also engage with more artists and YouTubers from non-English speaking countries to broaden our exposure."

Illustrator Emily Hare recommends taking time off work during your



Iris Compiet started promoting Faeries of the Faultlines a year before launching her Kickstarter campaign.

Strangehollow is filled with unusual creatures from illustrator Emily Hare.

campaign – something she wasn't able to do. She launched her artbook, Strangehollow, in April 2017 after shouting about it on social media for three months. To her surprise, she hit her £2,500 funding target in just two hours, with the project receiving more than £30,000 over the next month.

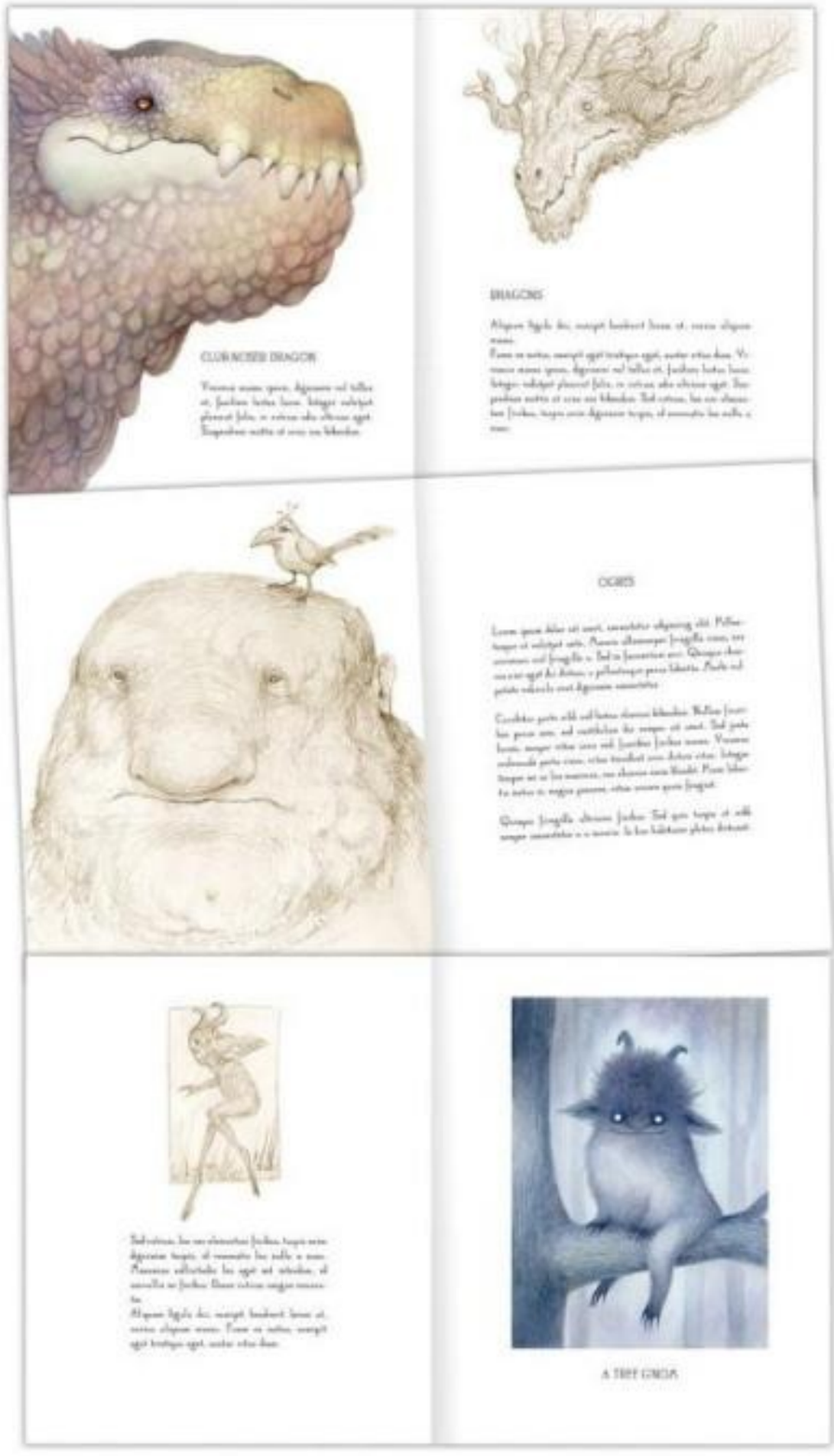
"I was overwhelmed on the first day of the project as I didn't expect it to fund so soon, let alone finish the way it did," **Emily** says. "Be prepared to be working non-stop, answering emails, posting about your project daily – and that's only the start of it. It's a full-time job."

Also, consider the time needed for your rewards. One mistake Iris made was to promise people who pledged within the first 48 hours an original sketch in their book. "I limited the time, but not the amount of sketches," she admits. "I now have over 600 books to sign and sketch in!"

Things like packaging postcards, prints and other ➳

An image from Faeries of the Faultlines. "Only the best paper would do," says Iris. "I didn't want to settle for less."

Spreads from Emily Hare's Strangehollow: "Kickstarter is a great way for people to find you – but they'll only find you if the project is successful."



pledges also take time. And don't forget storage. "I never thought I'd have more than 500 books sold," says Iris. "I'm looking at over 2,000 now. There's no way I can store that many books in my home, so I need to rent a secure storage space and get insurance on the books while they're in storage."

BUDGET PROPERLY

Don't underestimate costs when you're budgeting a Kickstarter project: ask for full quotes from printers or other partners, keep an eye on taxes and always account for postage when setting your funding goal. "People often get caught out," says Emily. "Make sure all your potential costs are covered in the funding goal."

"I've learned to avoid over-promising and over-complicating a campaign," says illustrator Sean Murray, who recently raised $25,593 for his second Sketchbook collection. "Too many reward levels and too many stretch goals without proper budgeting can get you in trouble. Make something awesome, show people how they can get the awesome thing, and then send them the awesome thing."

> **Make something awesome, show how people can get the awesome thing, and then send them the awesome thing**

One option is to collaborate with a publisher. Lois teamed up with 3D Total for her Kickstarter campaigns. This meant she could focus on the art, while 3D Total took on the technical aspects. "My publisher set up the Kickstarter page, answered questions and did all the work that I didn't have time for," she recalls. "I was able to focus on the content of the book and engaging with my online audience, which is my area of expertise."

Sketchbook Volume 2. "I think that growing my Instagram following over the past couple of years has increased my exposure greatly," says Sean Murray.

Sketchbook Volume 2 features a hard cover with gold foil. "Make something honest and present it honestly," advises Sean.

Sean attributes his Kickstarter success to his increased Instagram audience. And Simon agrees that developing a strong social following before launch day is key. He also advises building a mailing list. "For creatives in particular, the Kickstarter platform is useful for turning existing support into raised pledges, but not so effective at driving the new traffic necessary to have a very strong launch," he says.

Ultimately, he says, it's all about knowing your audience, and engaging with them before and during launch. "Speak their language," he advises. "Don't just 'market' to them. Make sure you offer something valuable."

Worlds reborn in art challenge

Future visions Cubebrush announces the winners of its latest WORLDS challenge for 2D and 3D artists

Cubebrush, the online marketplace for digital art resources, has revealed the winners of its latest WORLDS Challenge, which was held in partnership with ImagineFX.

The theme was a new civilisation rising from the old world, and the subject matter could be either fantasy or sci-fi. The hefty prize haul included $1,500 in cash, a Wacom Cintiq Pro 16, copies of ZBrushCore and Marmoset Toolbag 3, and a year's subscription to ImagineFX.

The winner in the 2D section was **Thomas Chamberlain** for his piece

Keen. "I aimed to keep the sci-fi elements grounded in reality," Thomas says. "So I researched modern day concepts for eco-cities and renewable technologies. This led to the core concept of my civilisation: the megaflora."

Jourdan Tuffman secured the 2D runner-up place for Downtown

Frogtown. "My main inspiration came from my love of learning about different cultures, and also my enjoyment of worlds created by the likes of Blizzard, and many RPG games," he says.

The 3D winners were **Valerio Bellia** and **Massimo Di Leo** for Wall Town.

Massimo (seen here on the left) describes the scene as "an inhospitable wasteland with an acidic atmosphere, and a big city that we brought to life by using warm tones and neons." The main challenge was capturing the detail, he adds: "We ensured the final render shot had a close foreground, a mid-ground, and a big background."

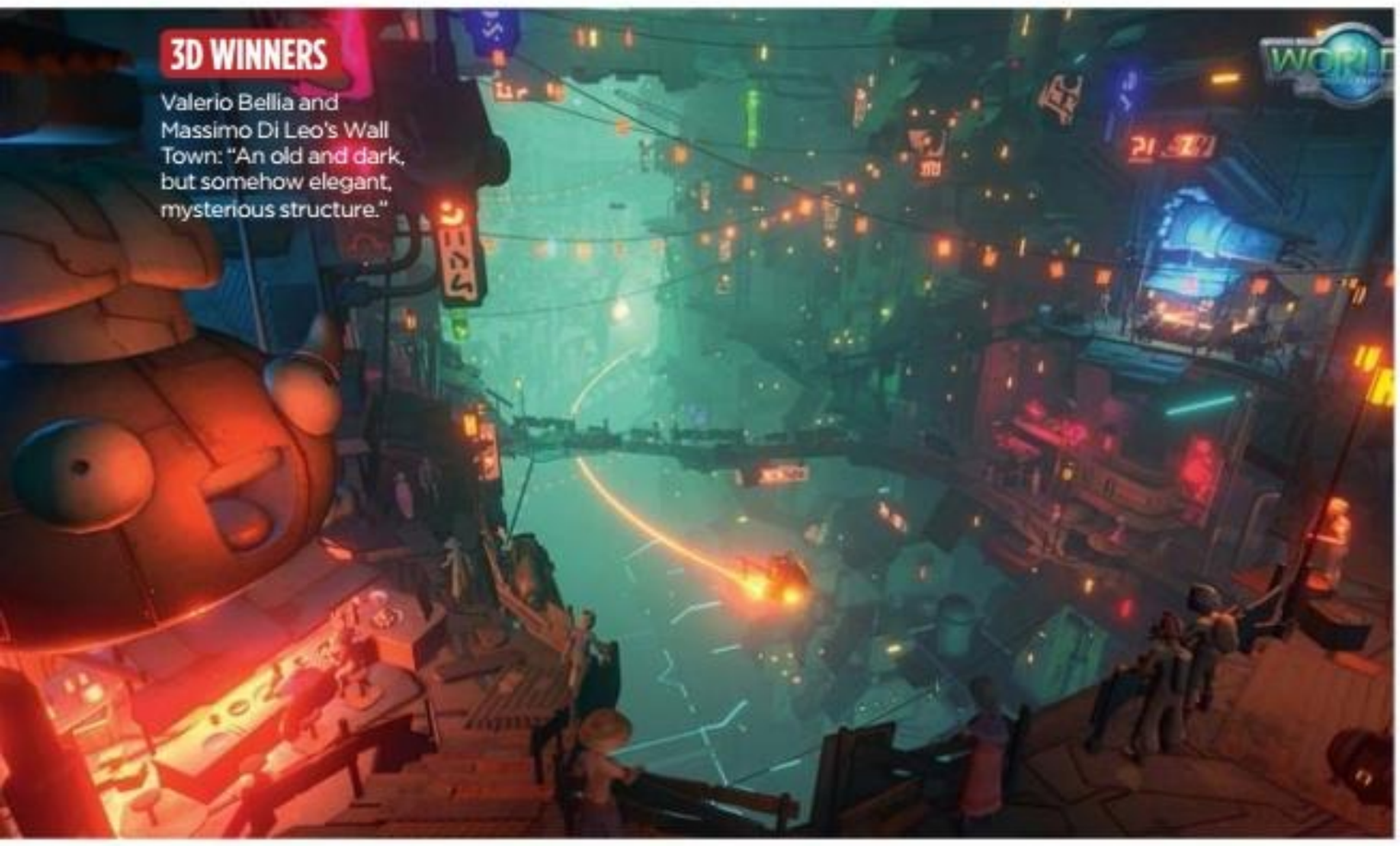
The runner-up place for 3D went to **Justine Hamer** for Uneasy Bedfellows.

"I was inspired by the idea of using a rock arch as a framing element, cutting through a shaft of light to emphasise something in the background," she says.

The next challenge from the Cubebrush team – ART WAR 2 – is now live. Create a champion from either the forces of Light or Darkness, then visit **http://ifxm.ag/artwar-2** for details on how to enter.

2D WINNER

Keen, by Thomas Chamberlain: "Creating the sense of scale was the biggest challenge. Photography provided the most useful reference."



3D WINNERS

Valerio Bellia and Massimo Di Leo's Wall Town: "An old and dark, but somehow elegant, mysterious structure."

3D RUNNER-UP

Uneasy Bedfellows by Justine Hamer. "I wanted to use rocks as they are a major challenge to me."

“I aimed to keep the sci-fi elements grounded in reality”

2D RUNNER-UP

Downtown Frogtown by Jourdan Tuffman: “It’s a village of Frog Ogres living in longhouses made from the remnants of an abandoned shipyard.”

I have a love of Japanese artists such as Noriyoshi Ohrai, Yoshitaka Amano and Hayao Miyazaki. And of course movie monsters: Creature From The Black Lagoon, Godzilla and so on.

What you see here on the easel is just one of many paintings that I have on the go. It's just how I work.

Bob Eggleton

Imaginative chaos This bedroom-turned-studio has attracted a lot of clutter – just how the artist likes it!

By changing our living quarters, and subsequently our studio, 2017 became a landmark year for us. We bought a new condo/flat across from our old condo/flat – it just happened to be available – and pushed our living quarters there. Then we turned the old condo into the new studio. My wife's studio is on the main floor, and we set my studio up in the old bedroom.

It has a very high ceiling, tall arched windows lining the outside wall, and a glorious northern exposure. The building is an old brick schoolhouse built in 1922, so it's very solid. During the upheaval, moving the books was the hardest. Boxes and boxes of books, up the stairs, and then building shelves and organising them into some kind of order (which I'm still working on). These are mainly the art books. The picture and reference books are downstairs, creating a large reference library for both of us to access. You never know how much you own until you move. It's all rather overwhelming, no matter how you do it.

LIKE A PRIVATE CLUBHOUSE

It's tighter than my previous studio, but it really works. I have most of my art book collection on show and various toys, awards and art supplies are there, too. It's like being in my own private clubhouse.

I tend to "attract" lots of clutter. No matter how hard I try, I wind up cluttering everything around me. When I get really busy, things start flying around me: I drop brushes, pens, pencils, tubes of paint and so on.

Having everything in reach is deliberate. The Japanese call this

“When I get really busy, things start flying around me: I drop brushes, pens, pencils, tubes of paint and so on”

My palette and oil painting area is my own private organised chaos. I'm always tweaking and touching up work, even after signing it. The result is this mess of a palette. It's all there when I need it – trust me!

I tip my hat to my half-British side (mother) by listening to music by The Moody Blues, and of course the sounds of International Rescue!

"cockpit living" and it certainly applies here. For me, out of sight is out of mind. At any one time, there are a bunch of paintings in progress, others only at the sketch stage, and so on. Sometimes I just like to look at all the new ideas waiting for my attention while in the middle of a current painting. I have so many ideas for paintings that I may never live long enough to do them all.

FROM SMALL TO LARGE

I'm not exactly a neat person. Often the studio is organised chaos. Sketches are everywhere, which are just thumbnails blown up to a massive scale on a large photocopy machine. This enables me to see if a small drawing will work as a large painting. At any one time I'll be working on four or five paintings in various stages of development. It results in me being very productive and prolific. I'm suspicious of studios that are too neat, though sometimes I do complain about stepping over things or squishing tubes of paint that are on the floor. Somehow, they always seem to contain bright blue paint.

With this move, I finally feel I have the classic studio I've always wanted. The best part is after waking up in the morning, I only have to walk 10 feet across the hall to get to work. Within three months I had finished six paintings in this new studio. I feel good creatively, and I have fun things around me and this continually inspires me. I get deep into the 'zone" so much more easily now.

"Taking a 'no one comes out alive until I create something' stand shakes me out of being lacklustre when painting"

NO RETREAT, NO SURRENDER

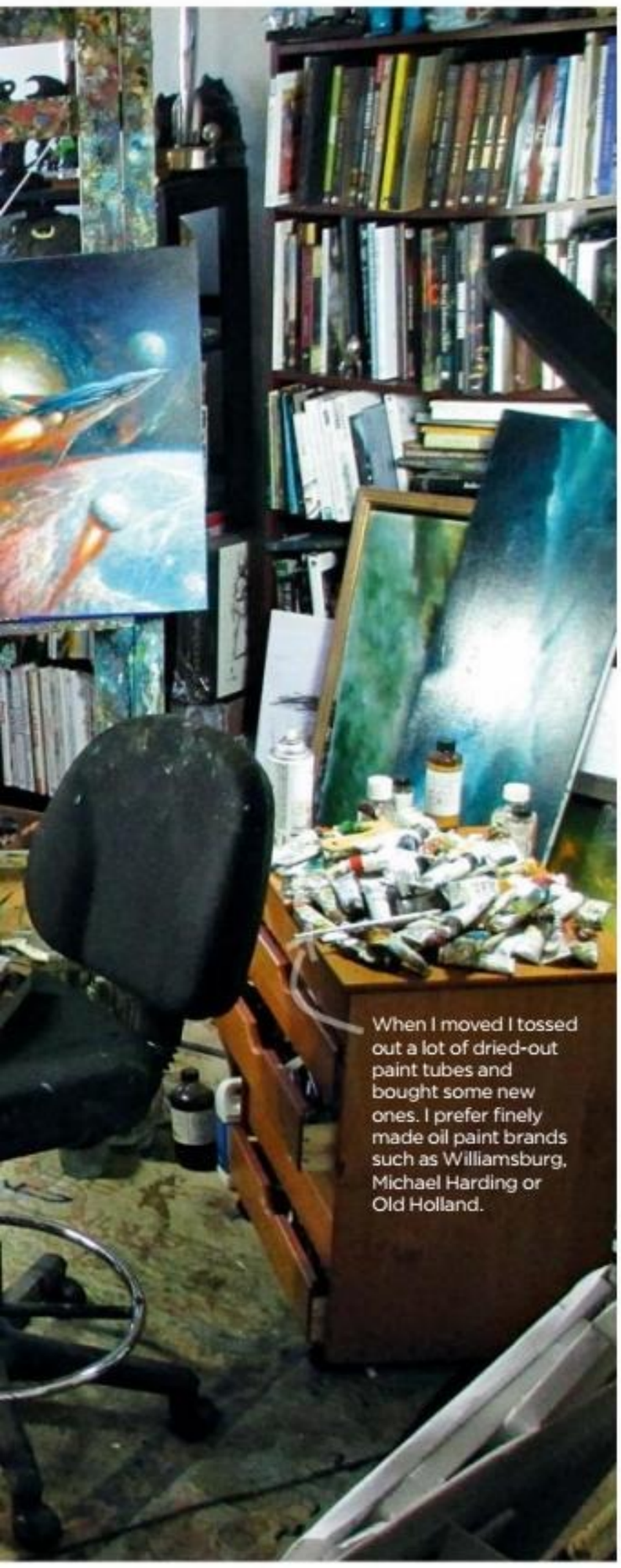
One of the things I sometimes do that gets me going is taking a 'no one comes out alive until I create something' stand, which shakes me out of being lacklustre when painting. I don't have a computer in the studio.

Yeah, I collect books, okay? My favourite artists are legion but I gravitate to JMW Turner, Ivan Aivazovsky, John Martin, Gustave Doré, Winslow Homer and Frederic Edwin Church, and I like various comic artists such as Wally Wood, and Jack Kirby.

Sometimes I bring in my iPad, but I keep technology to a minimum so as to avoid outside distractions.

My current projects include an illustrated edition of Asimov's Foundation trilogy for a speciality publisher, some covers to do as well as private and self-commissions. I've reached a point in my life where I've realised life is too short to make poor artwork. So I pick and choose my work and make it epic.

I'm never "not busy". Several irons are always in the fire. The best advice I tell anyone is to have a lot of things going on all at once. Keep six different directions open at a time, choose one and forge ahead. If it's not working,



When I moved I tossed out a lot of dried-out paint tubes and bought some new ones. I prefer finely made oil paint brands such as Williamsburg, Michael Harding or Old Holland.

I have a plethora of plastic monsters, robots and spaceships around me. A mere fraction of my total collection.
CARLOS SCHWABE
WATCHMEN

I love concept art books from movies! Even if I didn't like the film, it's a good bet I have books about the concept art aspect of it. I like seeing the thinking going on in the development aspect. Everything from Star Wars to the Marvel films, Godzilla to the Alien films, I get them all. They feed my artistic Frankenstein.

The north lighting is natural and perfect through such large windows. If the power is out on a sunny day, I can still easily paint. I have a T rex head mounted above my drawing table. I got it years ago and it became an albatross in that I could think of nowhere else for it to go. Now if feels right at home there. The next step is plastic ferns and plants around it to give it a "Jurassic Park" vibe.

put it aside and choose another. And always change the game up by experimenting and doing new things.

The other advice is to experience lots of art. Go to museums! Study Old Masters as well as current artists. The best way to get your own style is look at classical artists. Frazetta cited Doré as an influence. You'll discover that style comes from finding your own inspiration from those old works.

Bob has been illustrating science fiction, fantasy and horror since 1983. He's worked as a concept artist in films such as Jimmy Neutron and Star Trek, and has won nine Hugo Awards as well as 12 Chesleys, two Locus Awards, and a Rondo. You can see more of his art at www.bobeggleton.com.

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Aspiring 3D artists, students and working industry professionals will find plenty of insight and inspiration at this year's Vertex event.
VERTEX
2018

New event for 3D artists!

Get involved! At this year's new Vertex conference you'll get advice, inspiration and be able to network with pros like Christopher Nichols, Sébastien Deguy and more!

Save the date! Our sister titles 3D World and 3D Artist are hosting an exciting new event called Vertex on 13 March at London's Olympia.

This special event assembles experts from every industry and discipline in CG, from games and VFX through to VR, covering character concepting, real-time creation and more. This is a great opportunity to boost your 3D skills with top industry artists and learn from the world's best creative studios.

Brett Ineson from Animatrik will be at Vertex. His studio handled the mo-cap work that featured in Gears of War 4.

You'll get hands-on advice from CG industry veteran Christopher Nichols (founder of the Digital Human League and director of Chaos Group Labs), Sébastien Deguy (founder and CEO at Allegorithmic) and Brett Ineson (CTO of Animatrik).

There'll also be masterclasses and workshops from names such as Bader Badruddin (series animation director at Blue Zoo). Scott Ross, the co-founder of Digital Domain, is coming to share his insights, and will be answering audience questions, too.

You can also get involved in the portfolio review sessions, evening panel and unmissable networking event. There's even a recruitment fair for aspiring and professional artists, while an 'Ask an Artist' area will help you troubleshoot your technique woes one-on-one with experts from MPC, Framestore and more.

Brett Ineson has worked on The Return of the King, District 9, Warcraft and The Twilight Saga films.

As the event gets closer, even more speakers will be revealed, so keep an eye on social media using #vertexconf and **www.facebook.com/VertexConf** for more details. Tickets to the exhibition area are free, with access-all-areas tickets priced at £49, or £25 for students. Don't miss out! Get your tickets now at **www.vertexconf.com**.

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Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

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We enjoy talking to legendary artists in the industry – such as Syd Mead is issue 155 – just as much as Thomas Valtierra does reading about them.

How do you do it?

Time and time again, I pick up ImagineFX and am amazed by the big-name artists who contribute to each issue. Whether it's one of your in-depth artist interviews, a few choice words in your news articles, or in a detailed workshop, I think it's amazing that these artists can take time out of their no-doubt busy schedule and pass on their knowledge and insights to me. Just in the past few issues you've had Raphael Lacoste, Samwise Didier, Jason Rainville, Suzanne Helmigh and Terryl Whitlatch – not to mention Syd Mead, who is my absolute idol.

However you manage to get these artists to contribute to the magazine I've loved for years, don't stop! And of course, there's every chance that the new artists I read about today will become ones that I love in the future, thanks to their appearance in IFX.

Thomas Valtierra, via email

Claire replies Just doing my job, Thomas! But seriously, the fact that so many professionals are willing to take the time to contribute to ImagineFX just demonstrates the generous, supportive nature of the art community. I also loved your comment about today's new artists being tomorrow's stars. So many of today's big-name artists have featured in our FXPosé section over the years! Anyway, I'll keep the good stuff coming, and if you want anyone specific featured, please email me.

DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?
Don't worry – you can still get hold of it. Visit **http://ifxm.ag/157-ifx** for details.

Borislav Mitkov's workshop from issue 143 was a great example of artwork created using Corel's Painter.

More Painter please!

While I appreciate that the majority of your workshop artists use Photoshop, probably because it's the industry standard, I'm sure many ImagineFX readers would like to see more of Corel's Painter in the magazine.

I don't think the software can be beaten for recreating the look of traditional media like watercolours and oils, and so it would be great to learn how professional artists use it. I believe artists using both digital and traditional media would like to see more Painter in ImagineFX!

Nina Lind, via email

Claire replies I agree with you on both counts, Nina. Painter is a fantastic natural media tool, but, like you say Photoshop is the software of choice for most professional artists. We do also feature Procreate a lot, which is an affordable and popular painting app for a lot of artists now. I will look into getting more Painter workshops in the mag, though. If you have any Painter artists in mind, send them my way!

Poster possibilities?

Just a quick one – any chance of including some big wall posters of paintings that appear in ImagineFX? I know you last did this with the special 150th issue of the magazine, but I don't want to wait until issue 200 for another great piece of art I can hang on my wall!

Justin J, via email

Claire replies Justin, I'd dearly love to include a poster with every issue, but they do cost a fair bit. Is there anything else you lovely readers would like to receive as a gift alongside ImagineFX on the newsstand? Please let me know.

FRESH PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention

Neavis
@neavisblog

Mark
@milamber23

Eric Messinger
@ericmessingerart

Just finished something that you want us to shout about? Then tag us on Twitter or Instagram, or find us on Facebook!

Legend

MOTHER OF APOLLO

In a three-decade career, Julie Bell has established herself as one the best painters of anatomy in fantasy art. She's recently made the move into fine art.

URSA MAJOR
The US artist increasingly strives to fuse realism and surrealism in her work, both fine art and fantasy elements, as seen here.

ImagineFX LEGEND

Julie Bell

Gary Evans speaks to the US illustrator about wolves, bodybuilding, and the problem with women in fantasy art...

Julie Bell wanted to see a wolf for real. She went up to the Kittatinny Mountains, the long ridge that cuts across northwestern New Jersey, into the woods there, where packs of wolves roam the 10 acres of The Lakota Wolf Preserve.

Growing up in Texas, she loved to paint. She also kept dogs and horses, and enjoyed the outdoors. Yet she never thought to put the two together and paint nature. Then she received a commission from Tor Books to work on a cover for a story about wolves. Julie used a photo reference. Tor liked the work and asked her to create covers for the rest of the books in the series. A photo just wouldn't do it.

"The thing I didn't expect was that it would affect me emotionally," says Julie. "Being around them, spending the whole day with the wolves… it was powerful. To see how they are with each other – so wild, so strong – and their feelings are right there.

"I'm used to that with dogs and horses, but it's different with a wild animal like that, something that's not domesticated. It made me feel so connected with nature. It turned my thinking around in all kinds of ways – it just changed my world."

Julie work in fantasy, westerns, wildlife, nudes, and many more genres besides. She often takes elements of one genre and mixes them with another. But the thing that holds it all together is the same thing that moved her when she saw the wolves.

"The emotional direction to almost all of my work has to do with self- ➤➤

Artist PROFILE

Julie Bell

Location: US
Favourite artists: Bouguereau, Waterhouse, Anders Zorn, Lois Greenfield and Annie Leibovitz.
Media: Oils, maple wood surfaces.
Web: www.juliebell.com

THREE HUNGRY WOLVES
Julie remembers having her "heart captured by a pack of wolves" when she visited a wolf preserve for references for a book cover in 2001.

empowerment. This self-empowerment leads to a certain fearlessness, and fearlessness leads to comfort with the rest of the world."

There's another way to describes what Julie does – the same way she once described her artistic ambitions to her sons: "I want to be a heavy-metal ballerina-cowgirl."

NON-STOP CREATIVITY

In a recent interview, Julie confessed that when she speaks to someone face to face, she sizes them up. She studies why that person's nose and eyes look the way they do, how the shadows work on their face, and the highlights. "I work every second I have," she says. "My whole life is about my work."

Julie keeps sketchbooks, constantly drawing things that could be "possible seeds for later on." What they'll grow into, even Julie doesn't know. It's rarely anything like the original. Over time, she's learned not to fight this – to allow her mind to jump around, even to work with it.

"I really do feel like I'm a partner with my art," she says. "I let the art speak, as if it were a being that dances along with me, and we co-operate. If the art is leading me a little further this way, it's like, 'Oh! Okay. So that's what we're doing? I didn't know that.'

"It really works out, keeping it where you're not struggling too hard. When you're learning the basic skills of art, there's a lot of struggling to get control of accuracy. When you have that under control, and the more you can relax and not struggle, it comes out better."

A new piece starts with a sketch, a photograph, or a model hired to sit in her studio. Sometimes Julie has something specific in mind. Other times she just plays with poses, lights and no fixed ideas, and then lets it turn out how it turns.

She once described her work as "realism, but with a surrealistic turn." And for that realism, for the ➳

"I really do feel like I'm a partner with my art. I let the art speak, as if it were a being that dances along with me"

THE FINE ART OF ANATOMY AND BODYBUILDING

Julie is known for her dazzling anatomy skills, but this knowledge isn't all down to her training in art

Julie Bell started taking art seriously at 16. That's when she enrolled in classes. But at 25, she began another kind of training that would add a new layer of knowledge to her work, particularly when it came to anatomy. Julie became a bodybuilder.

"You gotta mean it," she says. "If you want to compete in bodybuilding you don't just accidentally do it." Julie meant it. She packed on muscle and earned a national ranking in the sport.

In art, she's celebrated for the accuracy of her anatomy work. Bodybuilding played a big a part in this. Not only does she knows the names of muscles and how they should look on the canvas, she also knows how they work, how they move, and how they interact with other muscles.

"When you're doing a certain action," she says, "you know the muscles that are going to be activated for that particular action, so you can emphasise those a little more and make it have more of that action."

Julie also has experience as a ballet dancer: "Ballet had a big effect on my sense of motion. All those things make you aware of the body in a different way." She says anyone can improve their knowledge of anatomy by thinking about muscles this way – as connected, dynamic things. To think like a bodybuilder or ballet dancer, you must think in terms of "energy lines," about how one muscle joins to another to create a "flow."

Studying anatomy in a purely technical way makes your figures look stiff: a kind of stuck-together composite of parts. Instead try to think to think of the energy, the flow that makes a person rush or relax or tense up. Learn to see these energy lines in others, and feel them in your own body, and they'll soon find their way into your work. Julie quit competitive bodybuilding, but look at her art and you can see its lasting effect.

ALYSSA'S HIDEAWAY
Julie says painting's like this don't fit into one particular genre because she never wants to feel tied down to one way of working.

Legend

PEACOCK AND FIREBIRD
Even when creating a fictional beast, Julie strives for accuracy as seen here. "Parts of the creature," she says, "may be based on reality of some animal or human."

BACKSTAGE JITTERS
Julie kept horses all her life, but didn't paint them until later in her career. She now has a whole section on her website dedicated to equine art.

precision of it, she needs to see a visual reference rather than just "invent things." Even one of her creatures, while it may look inventive, is based on some real human or animal.

It's different with commissions. Julie counts among her past clients Nike, Coca-Cola and The Ford Motor Company. She did an album cover for Meat Loaf. She worked for DC and was the first woman ever to paint Conan for Marvel. Often these clients have a fixed idea of what they want and there's less room to let the mind wander. Switching between varied genres and paintings and commissions has never been a problem. In fact, Julie likes work this way.

"Of course I like to put my own stamp on it," she says. "But I have to understand that, if I'm being hired to do a particular job, I'm fulfilling their needs of what they want.

"If I wanted to have an extra room put on my house, I don't want somebody else telling me I can't make

WILD DREAMS
Julie says nudity in fantasy art is all about context. When painting female nudes, she aims to show the subject as being empowered.

SUN DRAGON
Early in her career Julie was competitive with her husband, Boris Vallejo, who's also a renowned fantasy artist.

ABBY
For this piece, Julie hired a model rather than use reference photos. She prefer professionals to amateurs, because "pros understand what the whole thing is about."

"There are going to be people who object to the fact that I show women's bodies in my paintings"

it look how I want it to look. If I'm paying to have that room, I want it to be how I want it to be. I imagine they feel the same way about their projects."

WOMEN IN FANTASY ART

In 1989, Julie met her future husband, the artist Boris Vallejo. She was 30 then and learned a lot about art from the Peruvian painter. She particularly loved his dragons ("powerful and realistic and macho"). She tried to paint dragons just like them, but found they were never as good. Finally, Boris told her to stop trying to paint dragon the way he paints them and to do it her own way. She did. It marked a big turning point in her art. Julie found her own voice.

"There have been times when my art has been confused with Boris's, because people who see fantasy art don't necessarily discern the difference between different artists. They just think: 'Oh, it's a dragon. It must be Boris's.' That's the only thing: to make sure my name is on my art. I'm the artist of my art. But I don't think that's so much about being female. It's just a matter of the genre."

Critics argue that women in the fantasy art genre are invariably one of two things: naked, or non-existent. Julie holds the unique position of being both a leading fantasy artist and well-known for her work with the female nude figure. In a male-dominated industry, Julie says she's never felt she was held back for being a woman. And as the for nudity, it comes down to context.

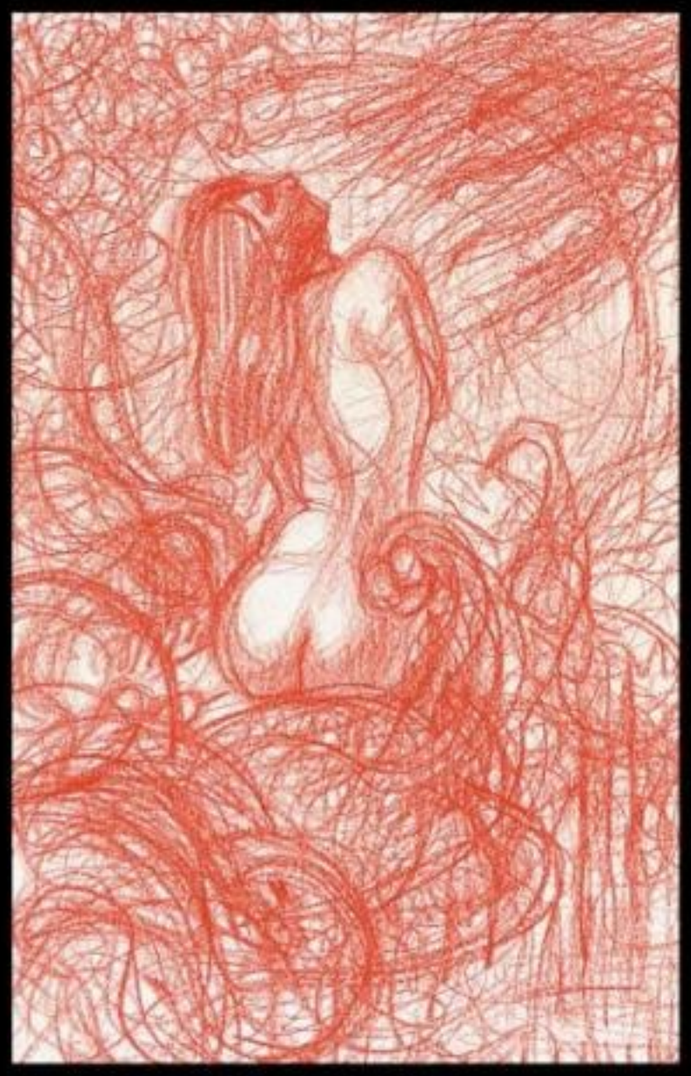
"There are going to be people who object to the fact that I show women's bodies in my paintings. I personally feel it's not whether it's shown or not. It's a matter of how much the woman in the painting is in control of

BRIDGE
Julie's fantasy work features in the calendar she and husband Boris produce, which is now in its 36th year.

FLAMINGO SUNRISE
Julie puts her working knowledge of anatomy – seen at work here in the back muscles of this subject – down to her time as a nationally ranked bodybuilder.

ENERGY LINES IN ACTION

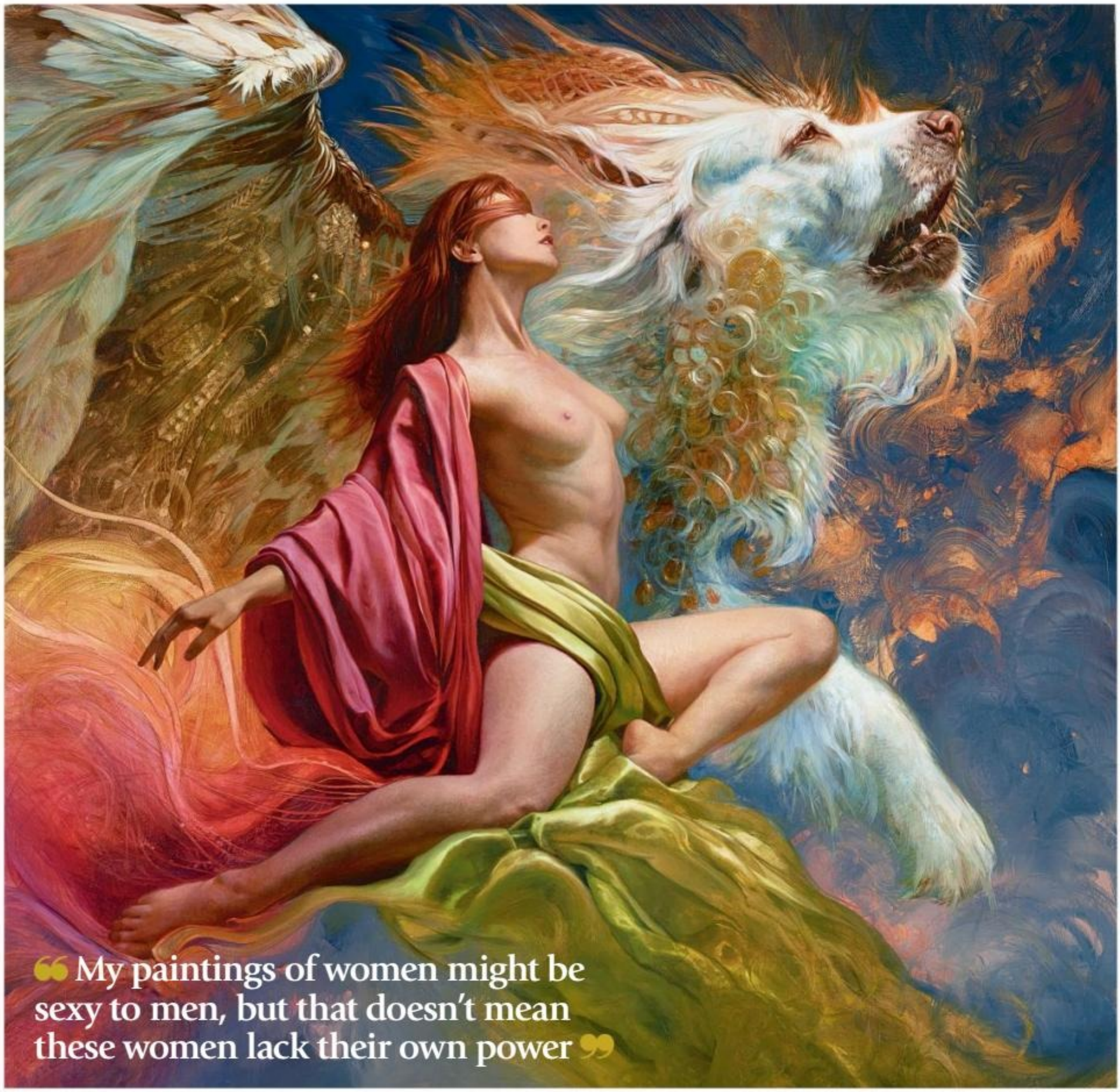
Julie demonstrates how energy lines help to make anatomy look more accurate and believable



ALLOW IDEAS TO CHANGE
I start by doing a quick sketch to establish my concept and basic composition. I get my ideas down in my sketchbook with the intention of painting them, but by the time I get to that painting, my mind is already different and it becomes a new thing altogether. So I allow this change to be part of my process.

GETTING COMFORTABLE
Next, I like to produce some studies that may or may not be of the same exact image that I'll use as reference in the finished painting. This makes me feel comfortable with the general construction of whatever creature I'm going to paint: how it looks in certain poses or under different lighting conditions, say.

FLOW LIKE A DANCER
In the sketch with the blue lines I'm demonstrating how I think about energy lines and spirals within any given figure. Energy lines happen through the body when you're doing art work. Internalising the way these lines wrap around and through a figure give a more accurate and believable portrayal of anatomy.



what's going on there. It's her own self-empowerment.

"Once again, that whole idea of self-empowerment is such a big deal for me. The paintings I've done of women might be sexy or attractive to men, but that doesn't mean these women in the paintings are displaying a lack of their own power. That is where it gets bothersome: when it's more the women being dominated or treated as somebody else's toy."

The Art Renewal Center recently named Julie Bell a "living master." It may sound like a lifetime achievement award, but she's far from winding down her illustration work. Yet to say that she's enjoying a renaissance isn't quite right either. Julie's simply getting better.

She works at it every day in the studio she shares with Boris. Julie has as many 15 paintings on the go at any one time. These surround her in various stages of completion. She may not add anything to them for months. But they're there to look at, to study, for her subconscious to work on.

UNFOLDING RAINBOW

Julie says the internet has broadened people's tastes, enabling her to mix genres. The galleries that represent her are following suit.

Julie has a big solo show coming up in May in New York City and is finding that the galleries which represent her are increasingly receptive to her genre mash-ups. She wants to push this further, mixing fantasy and traditional genres, and do things her way.

"I don't ever want to feel like I can't work on something just because my mind doesn't want me to. I really need to feel fluid and flexible and not locked down," she says. You'd expect nothing less from a heavy-metal ballerina-cowgirl.

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GETTING HIS HANDS DIRTY

From soil scientist to clay sculptor: Romain Van den Bogaert is a giant in the world of miniatures.

Artist Portfolio

ROMAIN VAN DEN BOGAERT

Gary Evans meets the Frenchman whose highly unusual career change made it possible for him to carve out a successful niche as a sculptor

Romain Van den Bogaert grew up in the suburbs of Paris. He liked role-playing games, science-fiction books and comics. At school, he excelled at science and went on to complete a degree, a master's and a Ph.D. – specialising in soil (water infiltration through soil porosity, if you want get technical.)

The Frenchman felt exhausted after completing his doctorate and took a couple of months out to consider his options. Really, he knew he'd made his decision long before: Romain decided to quit science for good and follow his boyhood passion.

"It was not my thing," he says. "Science is difficult to enter when you're not 100 per cent passionate.

> **"Science is difficult to enter when you're not 100 per cent passionate"**

Artist PROFILE

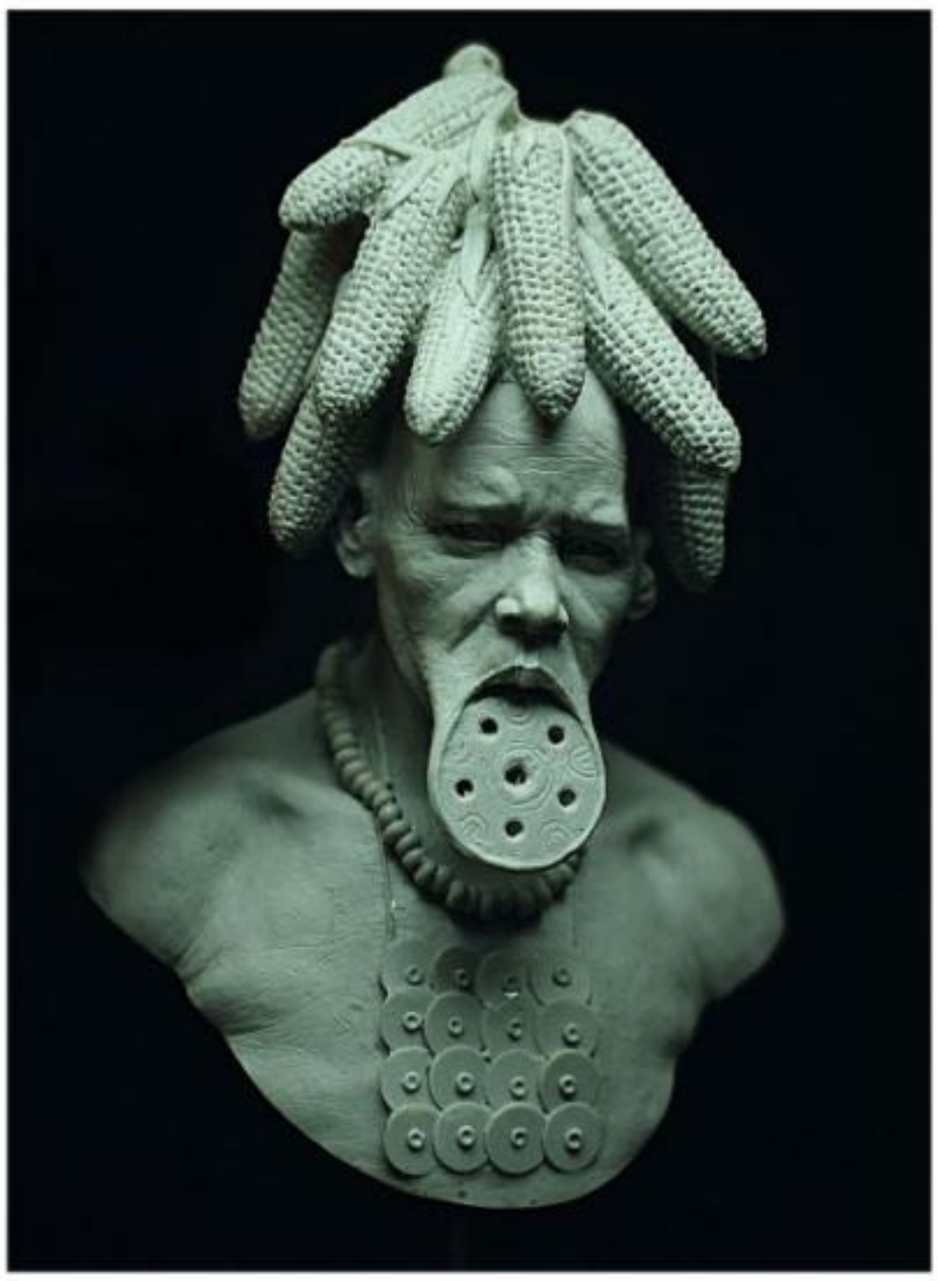
Romain Van den Bogaert
LOCATION: France
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Jean Giraud, Hayao Miyazaki, Rodin, Meštrović, Rembrandt, Bugatti, James Jean, João Ruas, Claire Wendling, Simon Lee, Takayuki Takeya, The Shiflett Brothers, Aryz and John Howe.
MEDIUM: Clay
WEB: www.romainvandenbogaert.com

It's like being an artist: you have to be passionate. If you don't have any mojo, it's difficult to keep going. I chose to switch my career plan to something completely different."

He'd started playing around with miniatures aged 16, painting them at first, sculpting them later. He soon got good enough to sell his work to small companies who made role-playing games. "Instead of working in McDonald's for pocket money," he say, "two or three times a year I sold those miniatures and it paid for my holiday." Romain wanted to turn pocket money into a proper career. He gave up soil and switched to clay.

CAREER CHANGE

"I just had to send a couple of emails to people I knew," Romain says, "and it filled my schedule for six months." Once he'd made the decision to quit science, he moved into a "very cool" co-working space in Lyon. He teamed up with 17 other creative people – a photographer ➤➤



ESKIMO FISHERMAN
This 2013 sculpture shows Romain's interest in indigenous cultures and the thing that ties together his varied work: detailed facial expressions.

"I'm not a fan of dark and strange horror-type characters. It's not my thing. I prefer smiling people"

and a graphic designer, three contemporary artists, someone who makes furniture, someone else who works in textiles …

His space is relatively small – just 12 square metres – but it's big enough for his needs. Best of all, he can borrow equipment from the other residents. "It's very cool because we can share lots of knowledge and equipment. If I want to weld something, I can. If I want advice on a new contemporary art exhibition, I can ask colleagues who work in that field."

So what sort of commission does he get? After a long pause, Romain says: "I try to avoid commissions" He laughs. Another long pause.

MANAGING THE DAY JOB

So, how does he make a living? "I have the luxury," he says, "of working in a niche market. In that niche market – miniature art – I can directly talk with my commissioners. I have a lot of flexibly. So most of the time I have only a brief pitch to create something: 'Sculpt a dog, sculpt barbarians.' And then I do whatever."

Many of his peers, he admits, work differently. Mostly, clients want something very specific – a piece for a board game, for example – which they take to a sculptor. The sculptor follows the client's guidelines. "I'm not interested in that kind of commission," Romain says. "So I refuse those strict guidelines. It's not my thing."

Science wasn't his thing. Commissions aren't his thing. And neither is the macabre. "I'm not the kind of guy who can relate to dark art," he says. "Some people create dark monsters and stuff. I can create monsters. My range of emotions can be neutral to joy, maybe a little bit of rage, sometimes. But I'm not a fan of dark and strange horror-type characters. It's not my thing." Finally, with a bit of coaxing, Romain gets to the thing that is his thing: "I prefer smiling people."

TRIBAL
Romain created this piece for MuMI, the Museum of Miniatures in Milan. He uses his vast collection of reference images to get the details just right.

MANTA
This sculpture, "an ageless shaman, wrapped in a richly embellished coat, calmly scrutinising the horizon," is a tribute to Jean Giraud, the artist known as Mœbius.

SCIENTIFIC AND IMPULSIVE

Romain's self-taught. He learned and keeps learning from his extensive collection of reference images. It could be a simple pose, a gesture, perhaps something to do with anatomy. He often sculpts with a reference by his side – though the finished sculpture probably won't not look anything like this reference.

Romain uses a polymer, oven-baked clay called Super Sculpey and has

MONKEY KING
Romain gives a punky makeover to this cult TV character from the 1970s, created with miniature manufacturer NutsPlanet.

SCULPTING WITCHCRAFT

Romain explains how an old lady became a witch with a backstory

1 The subject

I want to sculpt a mysterious old lady. I block out the main structures of her face, outlining the features of an elderly character.

2 Internal structures

I bear in mind the internal structures, bones and landmarks, and to focus on bigger planes and contrast, light and shadow. I smooth the surface and begin to add a new layer of information: secondary volumes, big wrinkles.

3 Backstory

I add clothes and drapery. I define a hand gesture and a little a bird to introduce more backstory to what's now a witch.

4 Adding details

I define the drapery and bring in the textile pattern. I finish the hand gesture and details, as well as more intricate details on the face, such as pores of the skin and little wrinkles. The bird is still very rough, because I'm not sure which species I want it to be (at the moment it's supposed to be a giant kingfisher.)

5 Smoothing it out

I smooth the details with alcohol and turpentine. The model is still unbaked. I change my mind about the bird and settle on a puffin.

6 Applying the finishing touches

I bake the model and engrave the superfine textile patterns. All that's left to do is add the open wing of the puffin to the piece.

THE EMERGENCE OF A PATTERN

The French sculptor on his vast, ever-growing collection of references

Romain likes to talk science. He very much likes to talk sculpture. But the thing he seems to get most excited about is his constantly expanding collection of reference images. How did it begin?

"I'm never satisfied," the Frenchman says. "I'm always looking for new techniques and artists." This need to always be improving is why the self-taught artist started to collect images in the first place. He'd use them to copy poses, gestures and anatomy.

Mostly, he gathered these images online. But he tore them from books too. The scientist in him came out as he classified the images into folders by topic: sailors, battles, aboriginals. But, now, even as a leader in his field, he continues to build the collection.

He constantly refers to these images, either while working or when looking for inspiration for new ideas: "I'm currently creating a kind of personal database of patterns," he says, "featuring floral patterns, vegetal patterns, organic patterns..."

Romain expanded this newest folder to include newly discovered textile patterns and old wallpaper designs. He's now figuring out ways of incorporating the images into his work. He says: "I'm fascinated by those little repetitive features we can see almost everywhere in nature."

NARCISSA, QUEEN OF THE WHISPERS
Romain created the piece in his preferred clay, Super Sculpey. It was commissioned by Black Crow Miniatures.

TURKANA WOMEN
This detailed sculpture of a Kenyan woman was particularly painstaking: "It was a long and hard journey to complete this project," Romain says, "but also satisfying."

> **"I pay attention to the mood of the characters. I'm interested in the face and the facial emotions that are on show"**

two ways of working. The first is very considered, methodical, scientific. He collects and catalogues lots of images, which he looks over again and again, knowing they'll help him in some way when it comes to starting the project.

The second way is more impulsive. He sits down with the clay, lets his hands get to work, and sees what happens. He could start with a form or a face, maybe a smiling person, and the concept evolves from there. With both methods, when it comes to refining the piece, he'll keep referring to his collection of reference images. Sometimes he makes casts of the miniatures himself, sometimes he sends them to a caster. Same goes for painting. It depends on time and the quantity involved.

BALANCING WORK WITH LIFE

Every weekday, he gets to work at 9am and knocks off 7pm. It's important to separate his work life from his private life. Living and working at home would drive him crazy. "I'm not someone who works all night long," he says.

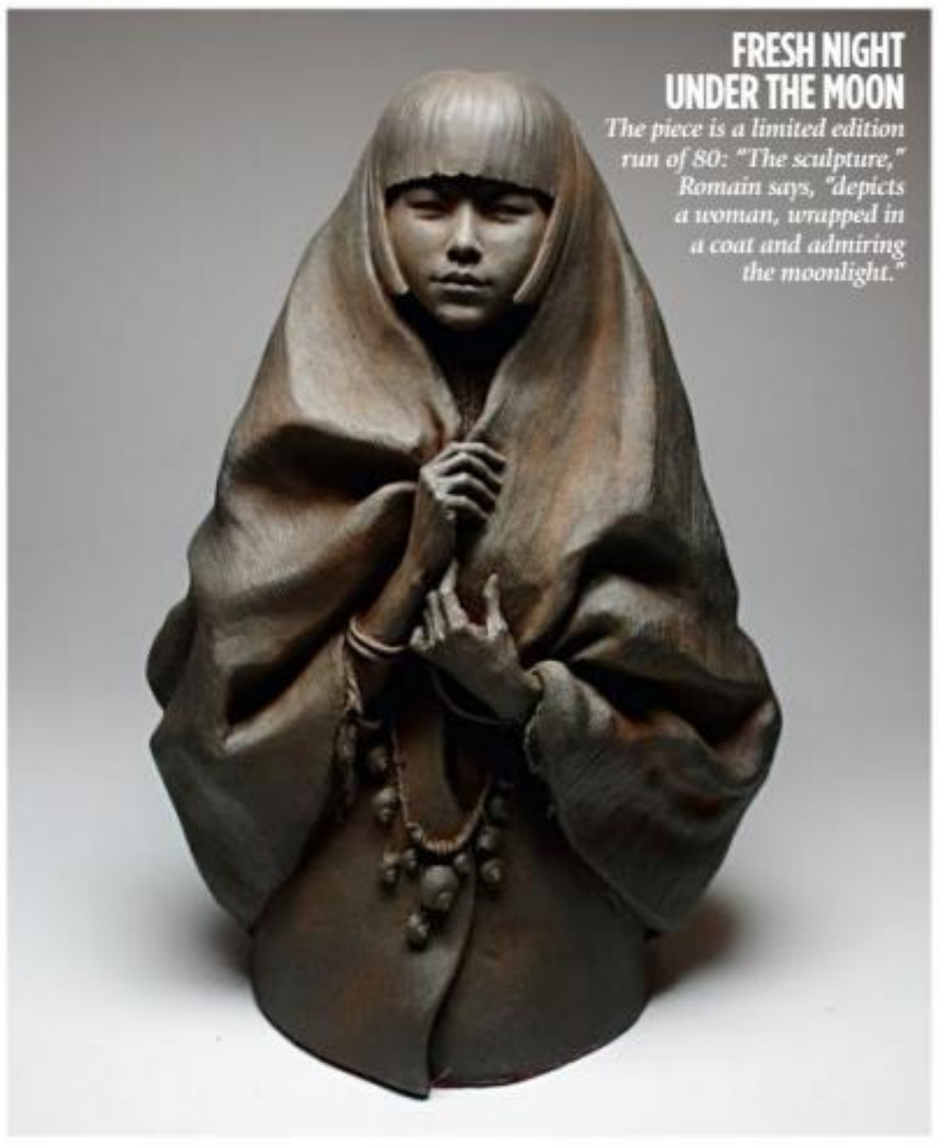
He books out bigger areas in his co-working space for teaching. This is something he started back in 2013, before he quit science to sculpt full-time. He found it a challenge: organising his skills in his head, then relaying them to people in a simple, understandable way. "It was very rewarding because I learned more than the students in those workshops. It gave structure to my knowledge and enabled me to go further, to really dig into specific subjects, such as a particular facial image or a certain composition or gesture." In addition, he admits that teaching offers extracurricular perks: "It's very cool to fly to lots of different cities and countries and get paid to do that."

Romain is almost certainly the only former soil scientist working as a

ETERNAL RENEW
This work-in-progress shot shows a Mayan-influenced character, one of a pair, the other being her husband. Romain will go on to add an intricate headdress of Andean flowers.

MAYAN KING
Part of Romain's Mayan series, this piece shows how the sculptor is willing to work on unusual characters, but tries to avoid working in what he calls "dark art."

DEMON
One of Romain's most menacing figures – though it still appears to be smiling – this elaborate demon was created for MuMI.



FRESH NIGHT UNDER THE MOON
The piece is a limited edition run of 80: "The sculpture," Romain says, "depicts a woman, wrapped in a coat and admiring the moonlight."

sculptor of limited edition miniatures. He's carved out a niche for himself. But ask him exactly what that niche is and he'll struggles to put a name on. All Romain knows is that he's finally found his thing.

"People recognise my style very quickly in this community. It's difficult to know why, but people are constantly saying, 'I didn't see your name, but I knew it was your work.' My style is recognisable. I pay attention to the mood of the characters. I'm very interested in the face and the facial emotions that are on show.

"It doesn't' matter if it's a human, a cartoon, a monster, an animal – the emotion, the eyes are very important when I create something. My characters are on the edge, between reality and dream. I also try to make them very believable, even if they're imaginary. The word that can describe my work? Maybe it's dreamish."

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Sketchbook

Anna Dittmann

This portrait illustrator is always seeking to stay on top of her anatomy game, which is why her sketchbooks are full of life studies

Artist PROFILE

Anna Dittmann

LOCATION: Scotland

Anna is an illustrator from San Francisco with a passion for portraiture, tea and ice cream. She graduated from SCAD and now lives and freelances in beautiful Scotland. While focusing on digital portraits for work, Anna enjoys life drawing in her down-time to loosen up and flesh out anatomy skills.
www.annadittmann.com

CARICATURISING
"I bend and stretch models' features to help me break away from my typical realistic approach."

UNCONVENTIONAL
"It can be fun to highlight a model's unique features."

PERSPECTIVE
"I often struggle with perspective, and unusual angles can be tricky to tackle."

“I stretch models’ features to help me break away from my typical realistic approach”

COMPILATION SKETCHES

“I like organising groups of sketches that flow from one figure to the next.”

DETAILED FIGURES

“Extra time spent with a model can be a relaxing break from loose studies.”

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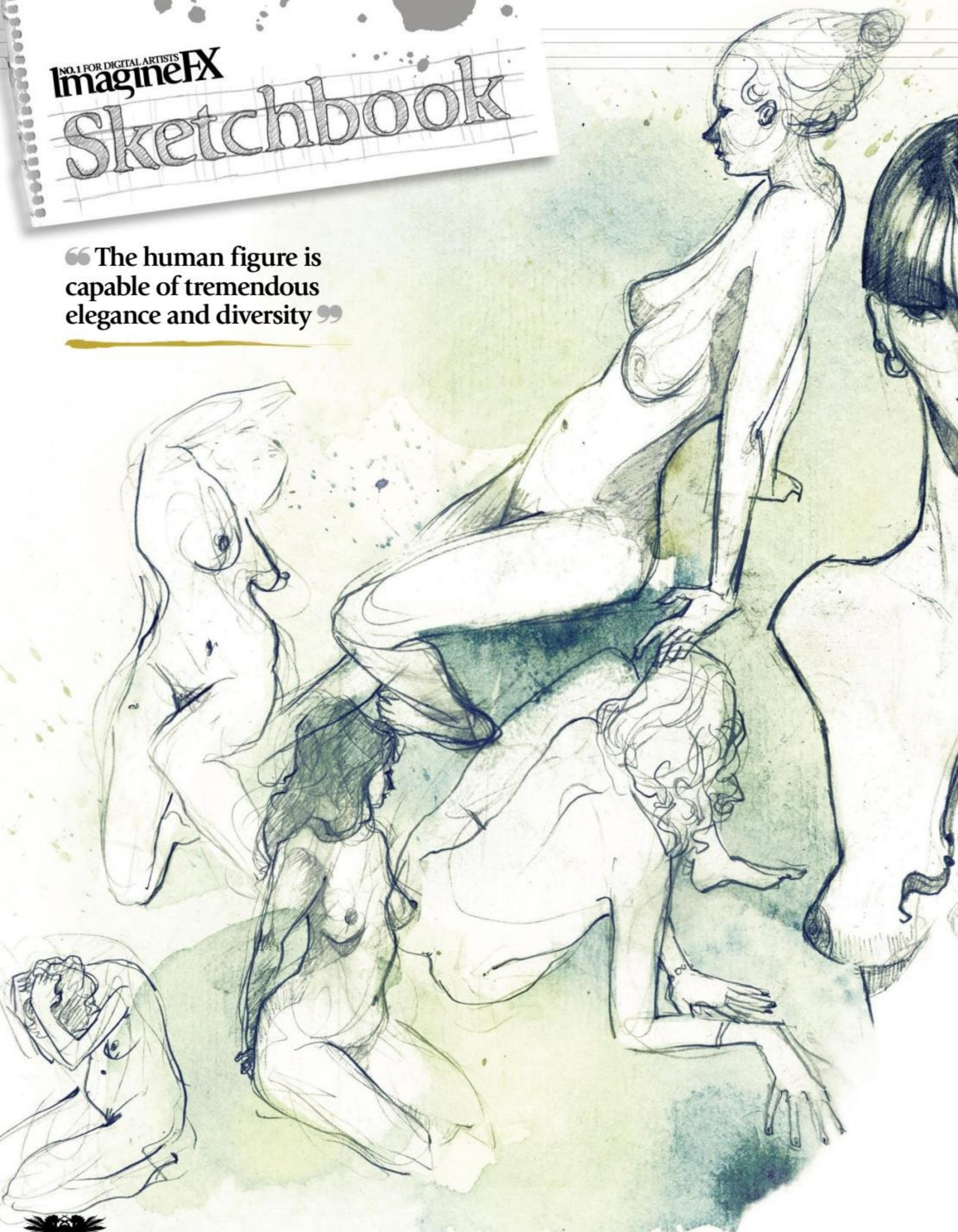
“The human figure is capable of tremendous elegance and diversity”



POSES

"When it comes to quick studies, the human figure is capable of tremendous elegance and diversity. I typically spend between two and 15 minutes capturing all of the body's movement."

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BACKS

"Angles that force me away from the model's face make for a refreshing change."

HAND STUDIES

"Concentrating on a particular body part can be – ahem – handy, especially areas that you feel could use some improvement."

LIGHTING

"I prefer using linear strokes. They enable me to create soft shadows."

EXPRESSION

"When indulging in a portrait, I spend much of my time defining the model's facial features."

“Models who interact can be a challenging and rewarding way to synchronise poses”

ACTION

“It’s not often that two or more models interact, but it can be a challenging and rewarding way to synchronise poses.”

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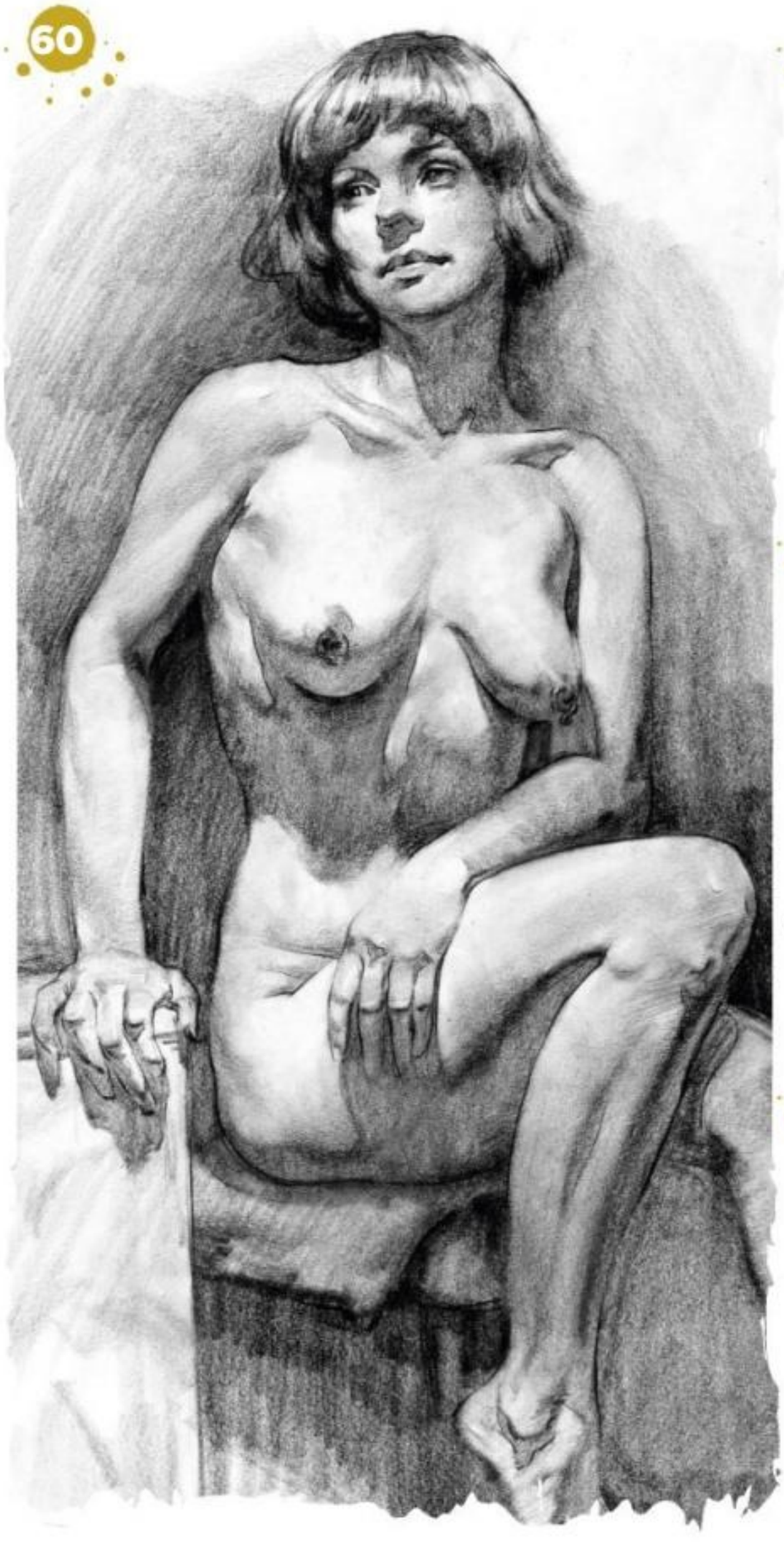

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Artist insight

24 TIPS ON HUMAN ANATOMY & FORM

Illustrator **Stan Prokopenko** is on hand to help you draw hands, before passing on his expert advice on capturing the human form correctly

Artist **PROFILE**

Stan Prokopenko
LOCATION: US

Stan is a fine art painter and online art instructor. He aims to make his tutorials entertaining and educational and says making art education enjoyable is at the core of his teaching.
www.proko.com

Drawing the human body without some knowledge of anatomy is like playing a board game without the rule book and some key pieces missing. It's frustrating and confusing.

After you learn all the rules and get good at the game, you can change the rules. But that's because you understand the dynamics of the game and you can change things to improve it.

Take hands. They're pretty complicated, and can be hard to draw – intimidating, even. But when you understand hands from the inside-out, you don't have to guess any more. You have a blueprint, you know all the dimensions, you understand the structures and joints, and you can make confident decisions about how you're representing the hand.

Before, that little space between the index finger and the thumb was just a "J-curve" or "L-thing". But now, you look at it and understand how the first dorsal interosseous muscle is overlapping the thenar eminence. You know that the dorsal surfaces of the first and second metacarpals are still superficial, right beside this soft tissue mass, and you trust the bones as landmarks to guide your proportions and structure. You know exactly what angle to pull the muscles off the bones at. You overlap lines to represent the overlapping anatomy and add depth and interest to your drawings.

If drawing is a game, then understanding anatomy just gives you more pieces to play with! So in this workshop I'm going to break down one of the body's most difficult features, the hands, into digestible chunks. Being confident with anatomy makes drawing easier and more fun! Then I'll give you some advice to guide the rest of your anatomy studies, so you can go out there and create the best drawings of your career.

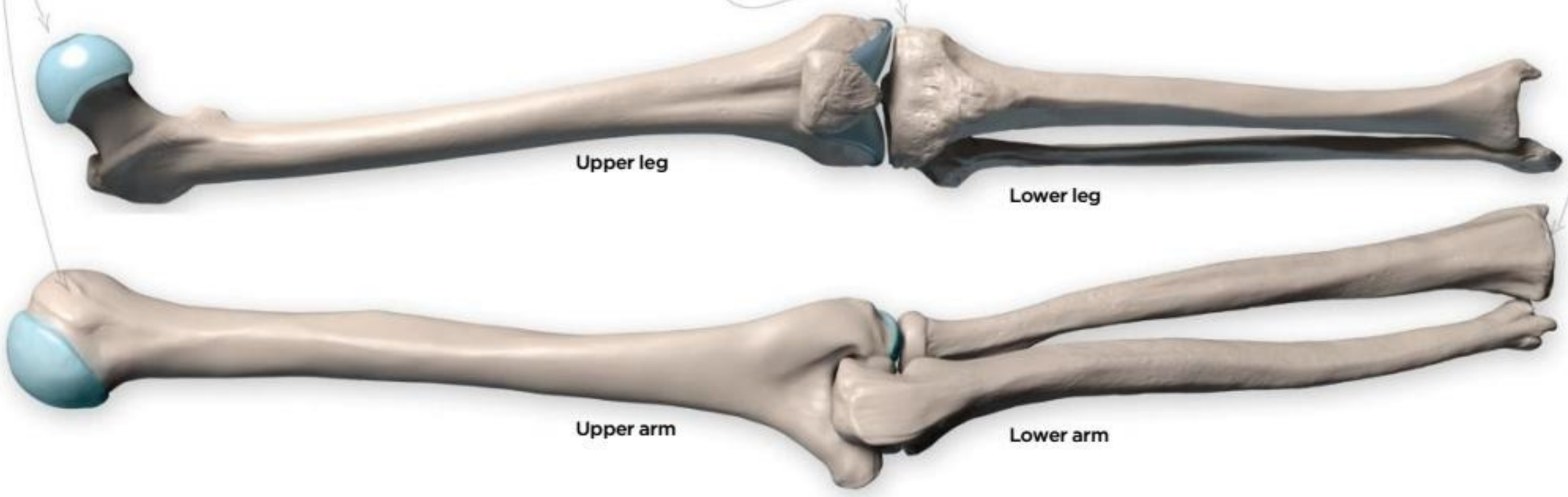
ARM AND LEG BONES

1 UPPER ARM AND LEG BONES

The humerus and the femur are thick, strong bones. They're shaped like mallets, with a long cylindrical body and a set of big bumps (condyles) on the bottom. The humerus measures two cranial units long, and the femur is three cranial units long.

2 LOWER ARM AND LEG BONES

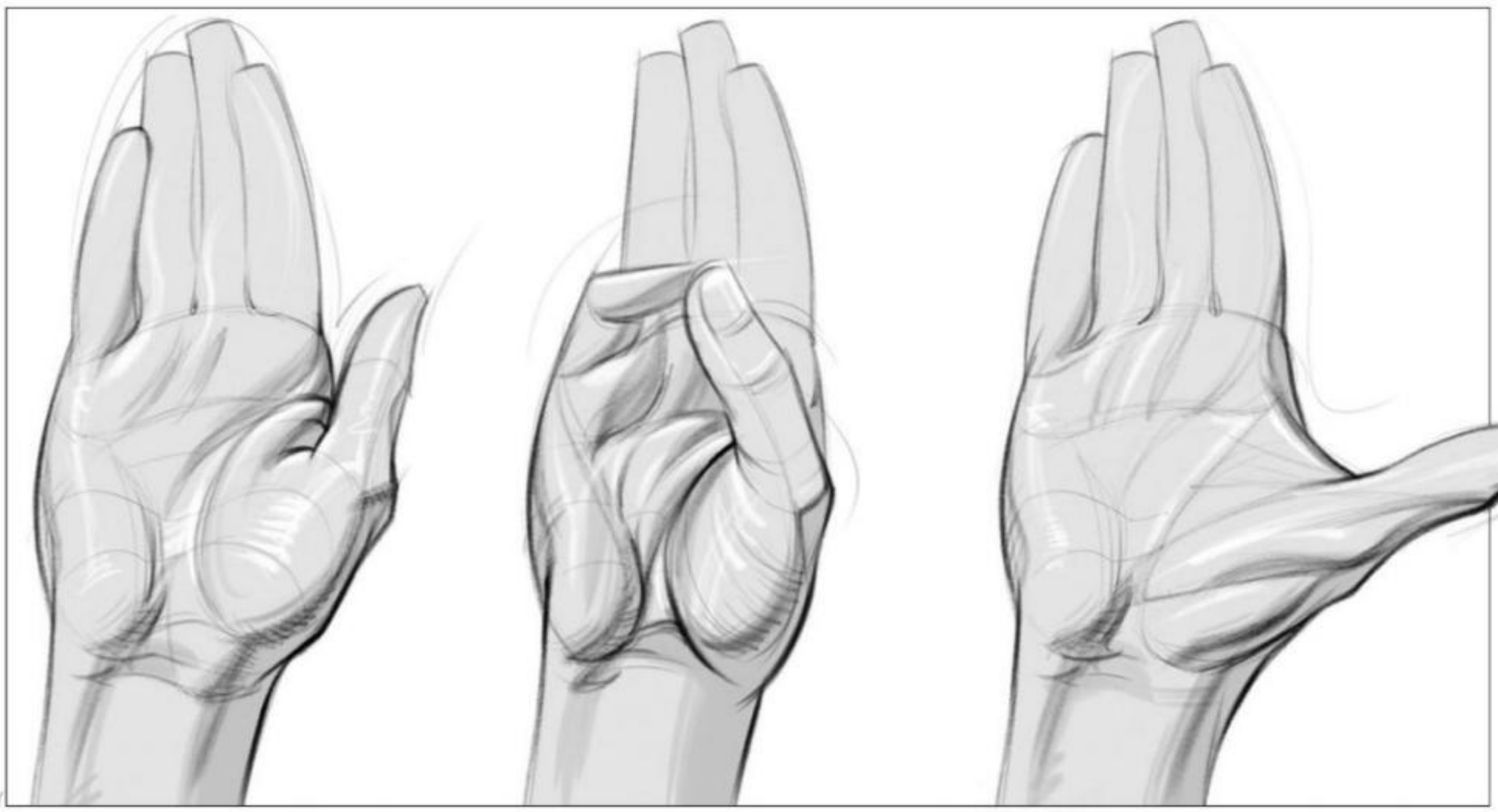
The lower limbs are split into two bones. In our forearm, the radius can rotate around the ulna so our hands can flip over. The lower leg bones don't move as much, but having two bones creates more attachment space for the ankle-mover muscles. The tibia carries the weight of the body; the fibula is there for support. The tibia and fibula are about three-quarters the length of the femur, and the radius and ulna are also three-quarters the length of the humerus.



3 HAND AND FOOT BONES

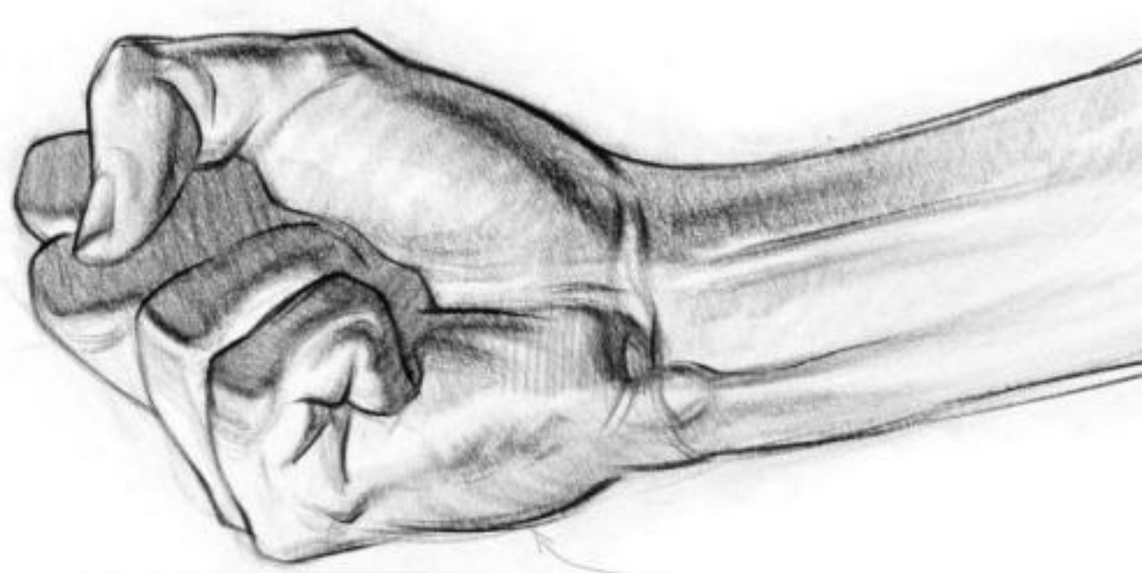
Our hands and feet are built from the same three sections: a jumble of bones at the start, then a set of long bridge bones, and then the three-jointed digit. But the proportions are flipped. The hand's three sections are organised from small to large for maximum dexterity, so you have a short wrist and long, elegant fingers. The foot is organised from large to small for maximum stability, so the ankle bones are long and tough and the toes are stubby and short. The hand's length is equal to your face, and the foot's length is equal to your whole head.

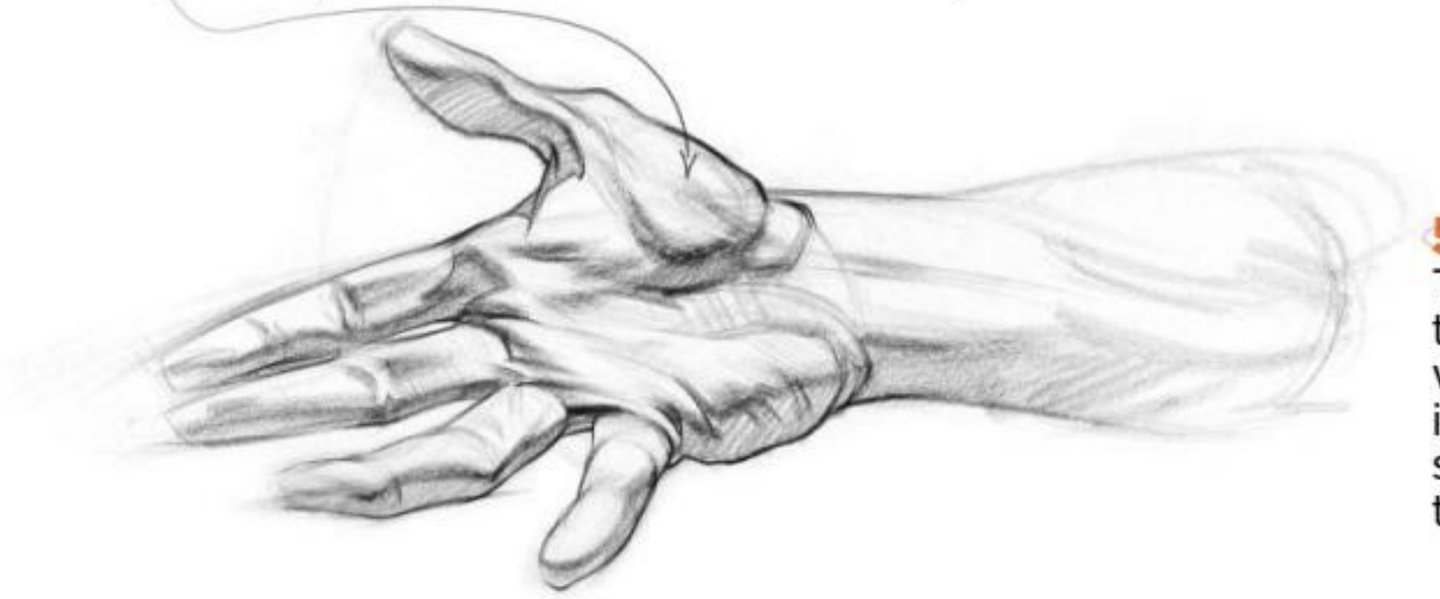
ANATOMY OF HANDS



4 THENAR EMINENCE

Most of the muscles that control your hand are located in your forearm (called extrinsic muscles). But there are some on the hand that you should know about (called intrinsic muscles). They create three squishy masses on the otherwise bony surface. All three of them are teardrop shaped, so this isn't too hard! You probably know about the biggest one that goes from your wrist to your thumb. It creates a rolling hill when the thumb is out, and gives the thumb a pot belly when the thumb is towards the palm.





5 HYPOTHENAR EMINENCE

The other palmar mass goes from the base of the hand to the pinky metacarpal. It actually wraps around the outside of the bone, which is why the pinky edge of your hand is kind of squishy and soft. This pinky mass is flatter than the thumb mass.

6 FIRST DORSAL INTEROSSEOUS

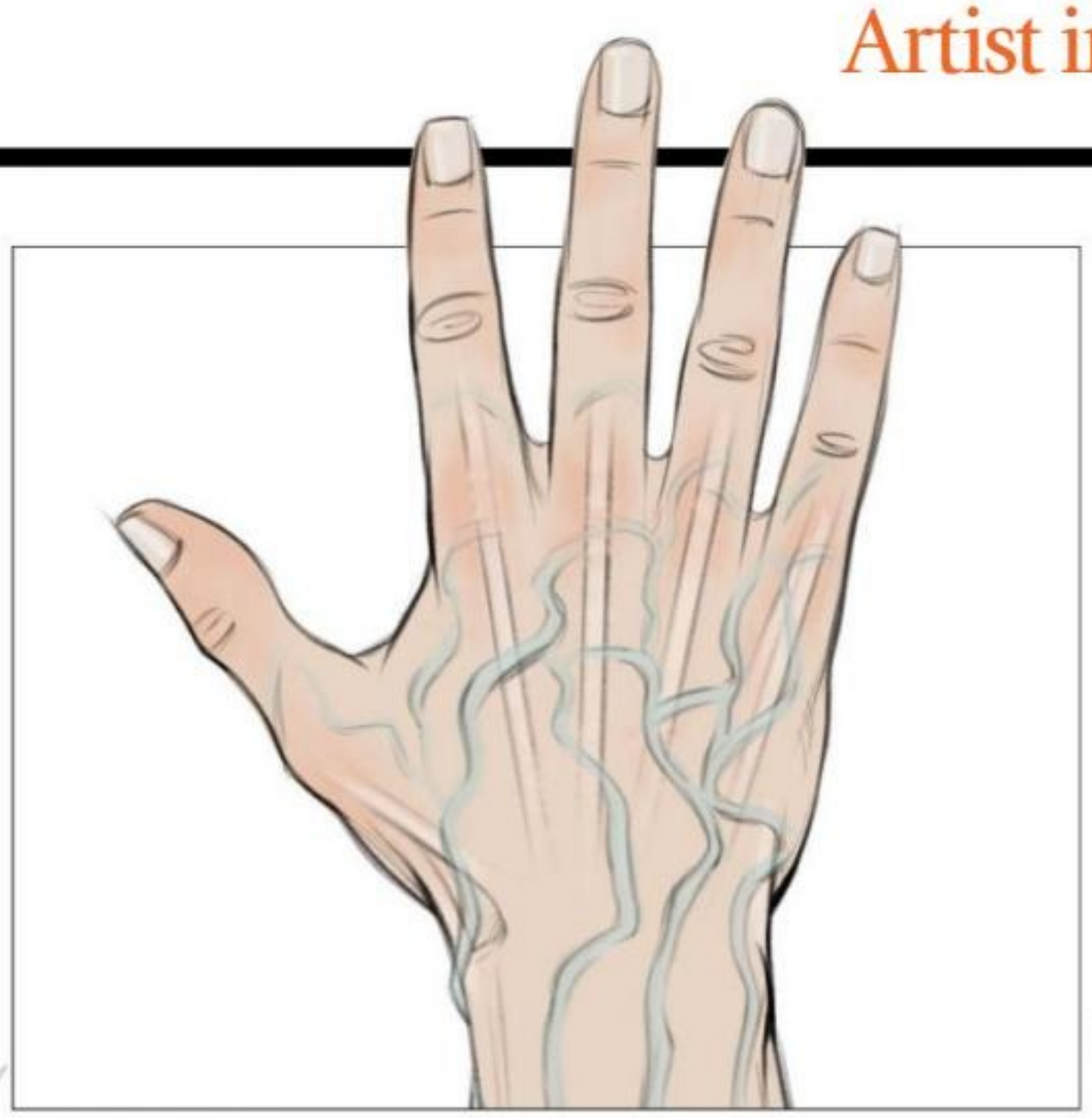
The third major muscle mass is on the back of your hand. It fills in the space between your thumb metacarpal and your index finger metacarpal. It's easy to see when you tuck your thumb up against your index finger and it creates a big, round egg form. When the thumb is out, it becomes stretched thin.

7 BONY IN THE BACK

The dorsal side of your hand is bony, especially at the joints. You can represent this characteristic by drawing the dorsal contour with straight lines and corners. The back of the hand is a flat plane and doesn't change much when the hand moves (just some tendons), unlike the front of the hand which changes a lot depending on the position of the pinky and thumb.

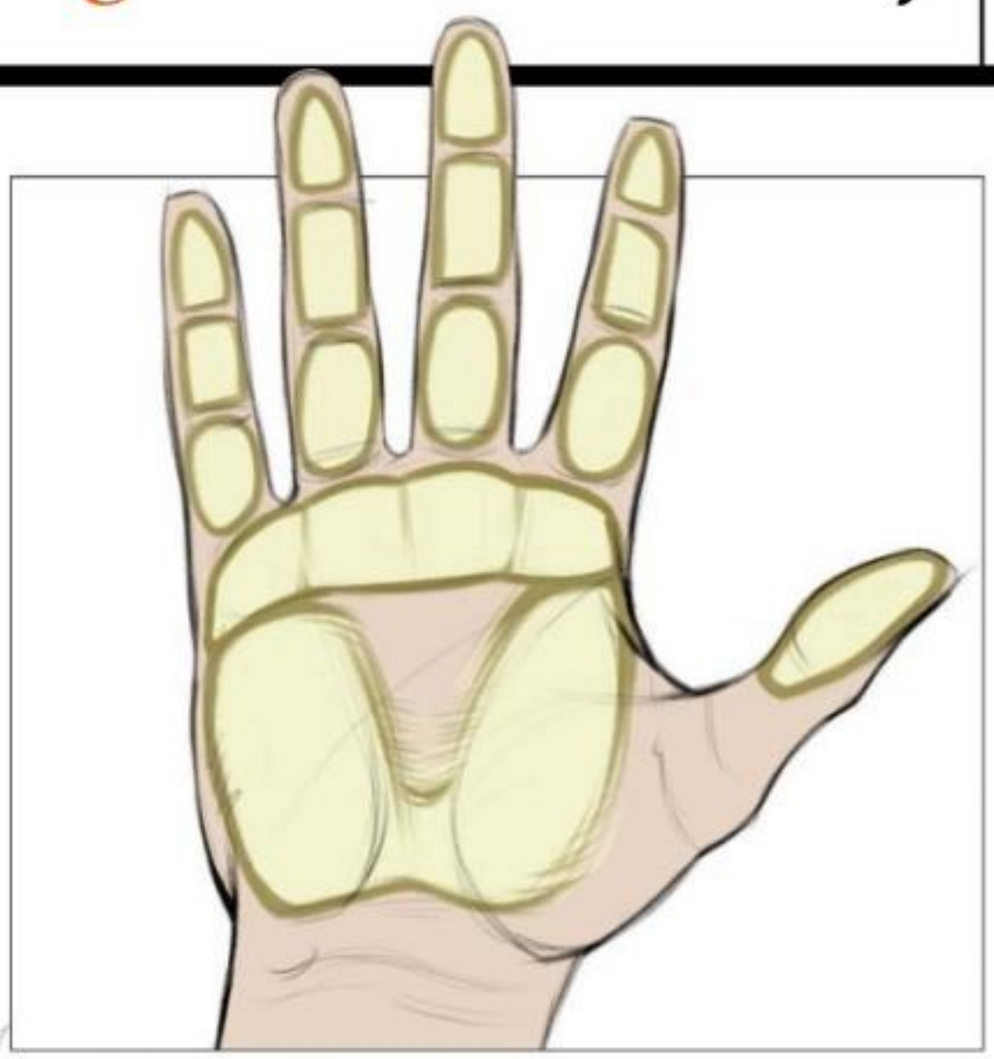
8 TIME FOR TENDONS

There are also tendons that run along the back of the hand. Each finger receives at least one. When drawing tendons, keep them subservient to the larger form of the hand. Don't shade each cylindrical tendon with dark lines and sharp edges: this will just create funny-looking, distracting chasms in the middle of your hand. A subtle indication here and there is all you need, unless you're drawing a character that calls for pronounced tendons.



9 VERY VEINY

The back of the hand also has veins. These veins run along the back of the hand, like tendons do, and meander in the spaces between bones where they're safe. Keep the difference between tendons and veins really clear: tendons are straight, and veins are curvy – much like lazy rivers. Veins also have a darker, cooler local colour.

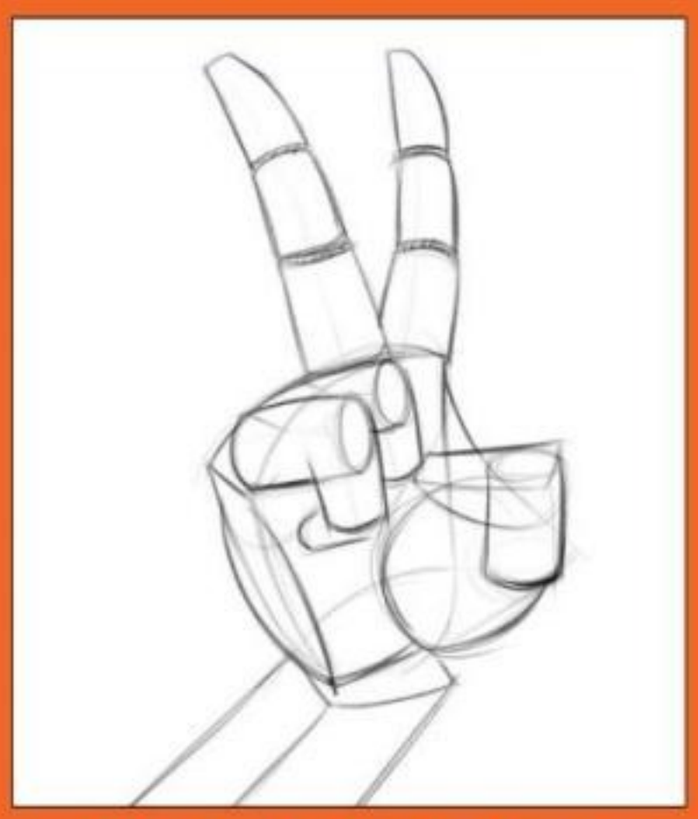


10 FUN WITH FAT PADS

Fat pads sit on top of the muscles and surround the centre of your palm. They cover up and soften the muscular masses of the palm. There are also fat pads along the palm-side of each finger. Fat pads are very malleable: you can squash, stretch, and flatten them to exaggerate the action of the hand.

11 HAND DRAWING

Here's my process for constructing hands from imagination or reference



A Start with simple forms

When I begin drawing, my first priority is the big, simple forms. The anatomy informs the design of my simple forms, but I don't start with anatomical details. For the hand, a box is a good starting place. Round off the distal edge to create the arch of the knuckles. Each finger can be a series of boxes or cylinders.

B Sculpt the anatomy

Once my proportions, perspective, and big forms are established, I move on to the secondary anatomical forms. I can add the three round muscle masses on the hand, and develop the fingers by contrasting straights and curves. I describe the form of the knuckles in small, geometric planes. This will make it easy to shade later.

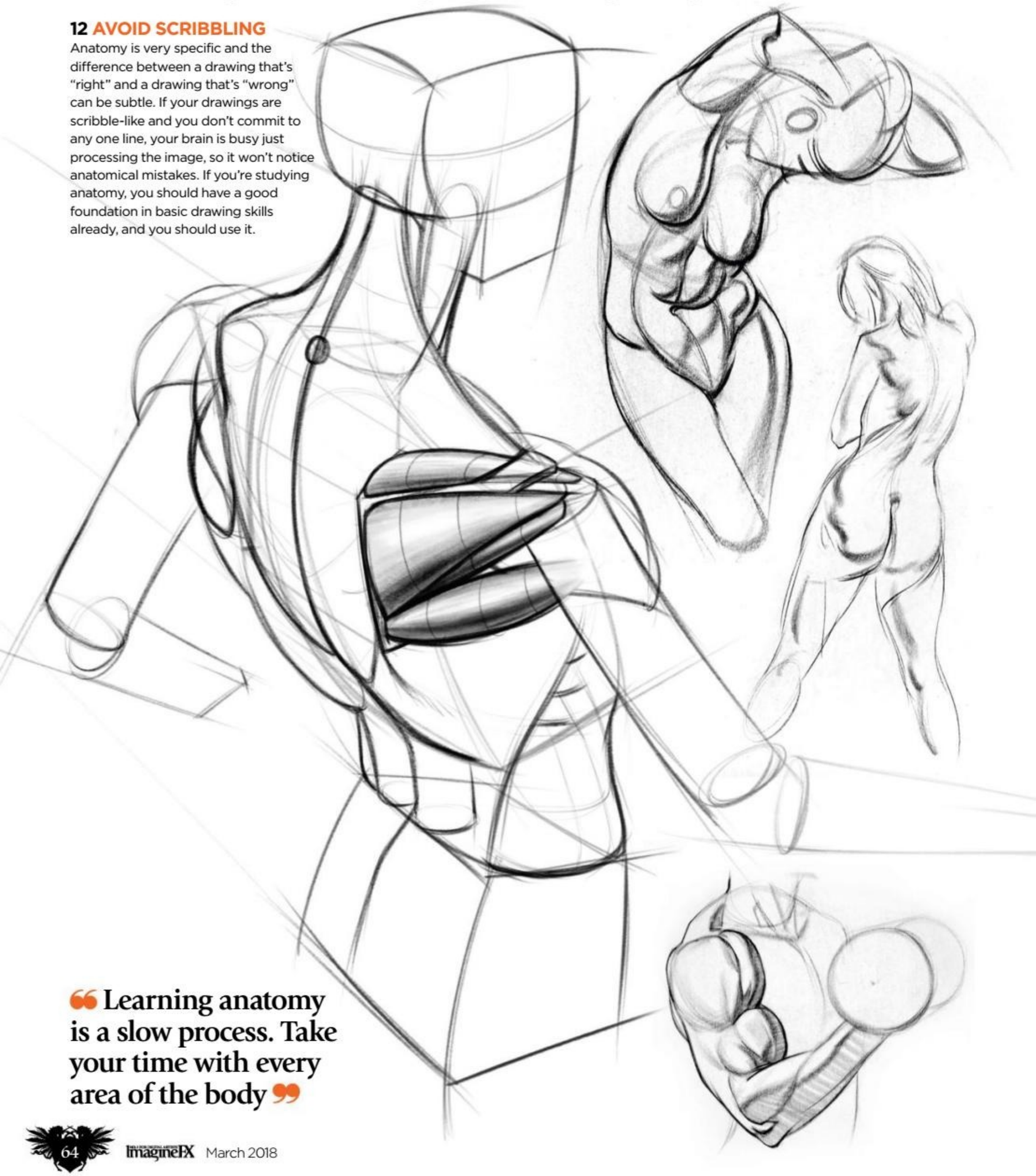
C Finish with shading

I identify the direction of the light source and separate the shadows and lights. Then shade the details in the lights. I always want the big read to be the big forms (from Step 1). If the details overpower the primary forms (the box of the palm), then I've messed up. Anatomy is cool, but it has to support the picture, not take over it.

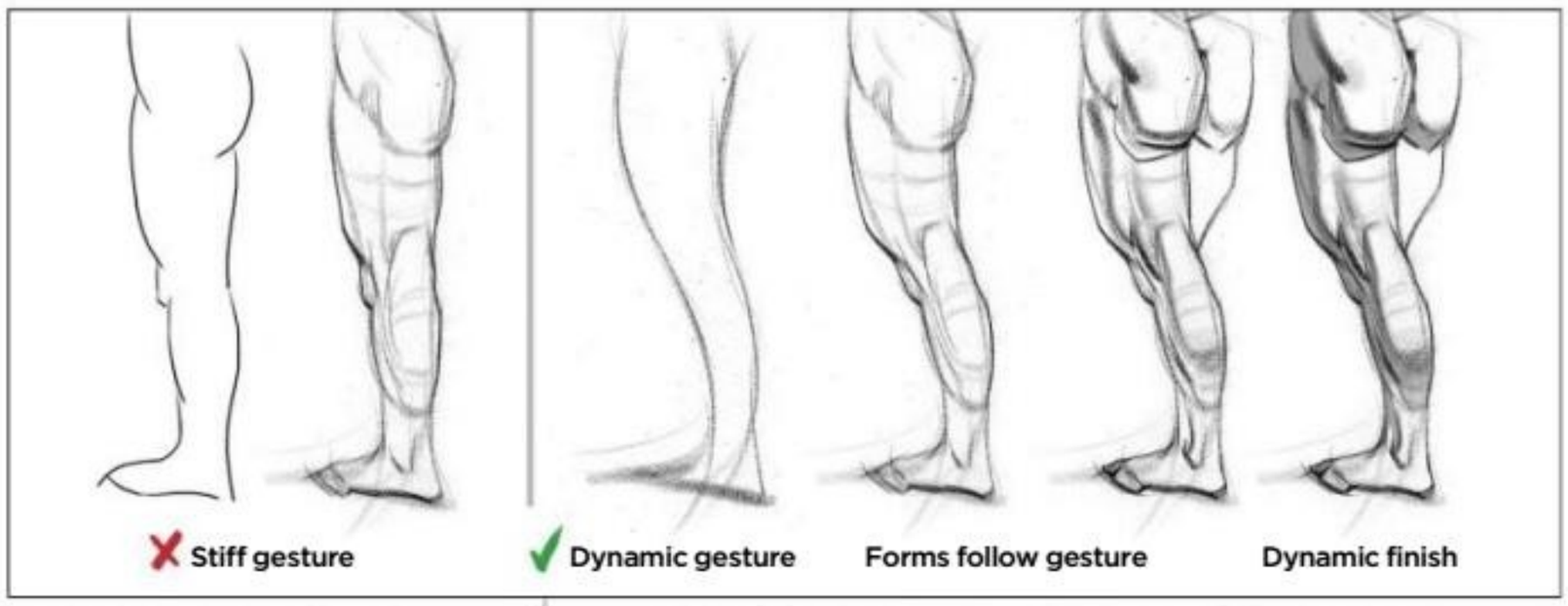
ANATOMY BEST PRACTICE

12 AVOID SCRIBBLING

Anatomy is very specific and the difference between a drawing that's "right" and a drawing that's "wrong" can be subtle. If your drawings are scribble-like and you don't commit to any one line, your brain is busy just processing the image, so it won't notice anatomical mistakes. If you're studying anatomy, you should have a good foundation in basic drawing skills already, and you should use it.



"Learning anatomy is a slow process. Take your time with every area of the body"

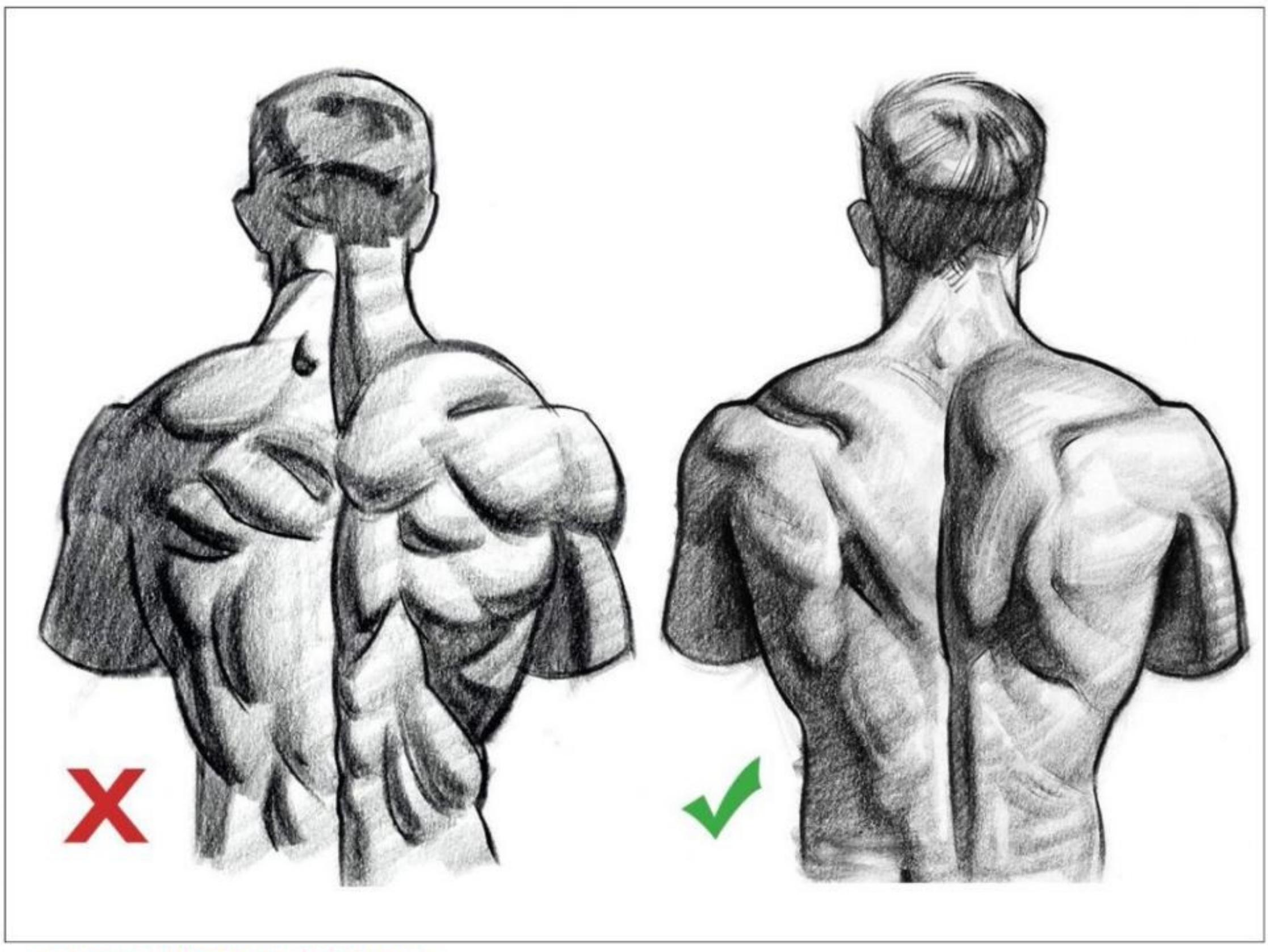


13 DON'T RUSH

Learning anatomy is a slow process. Take your time on every drawing and with every area of the body.

14 IGNORE GESTURE AT YOUR PERIL

Gesture lies at the heart of every figure drawing. Anatomy should be a new layer, a new way to express gesture... not a replacement for it. The anatomical forms should be designed to follow and reveal the gesture.

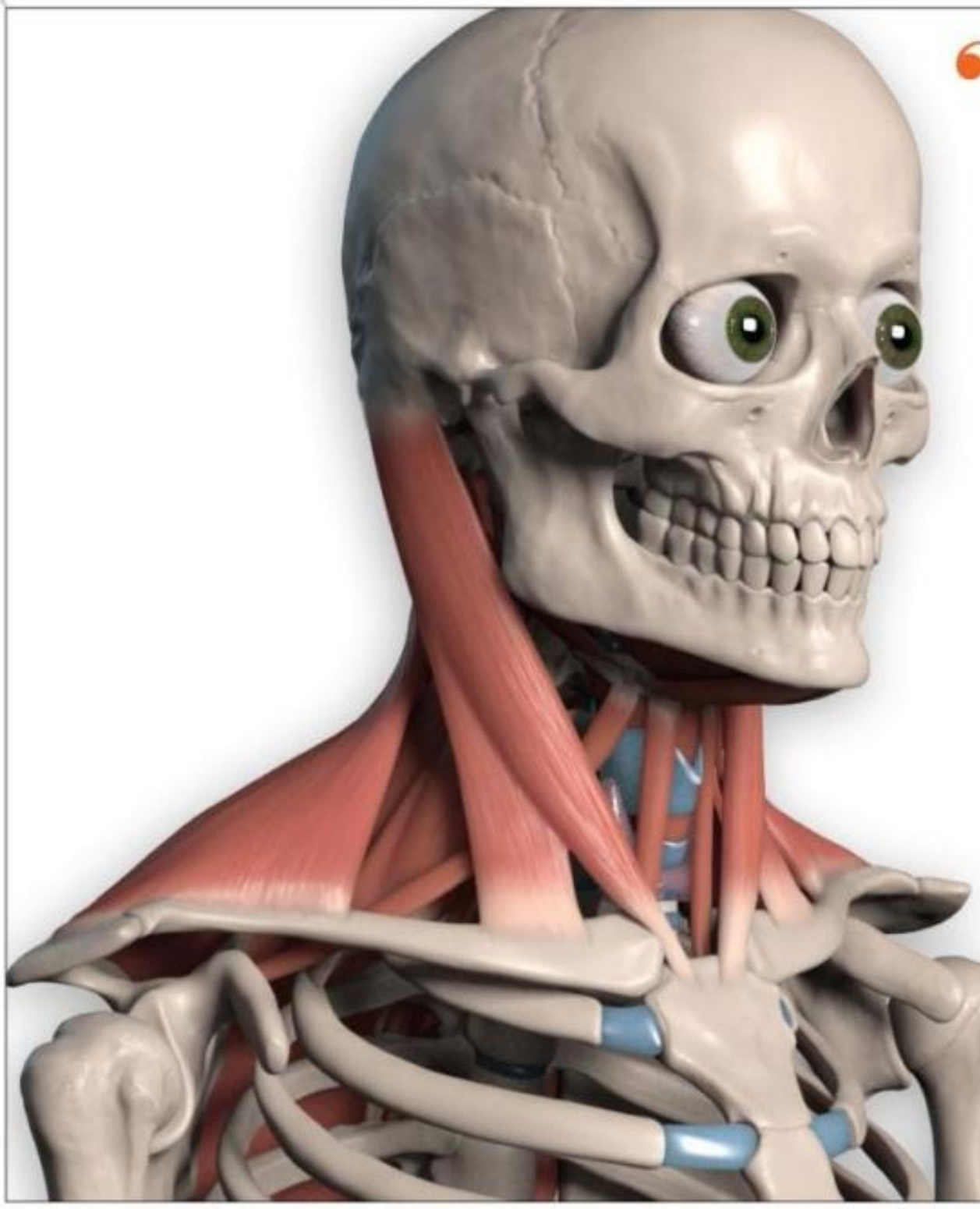


15 GIVE MUSHY DRAWINGS A MISS

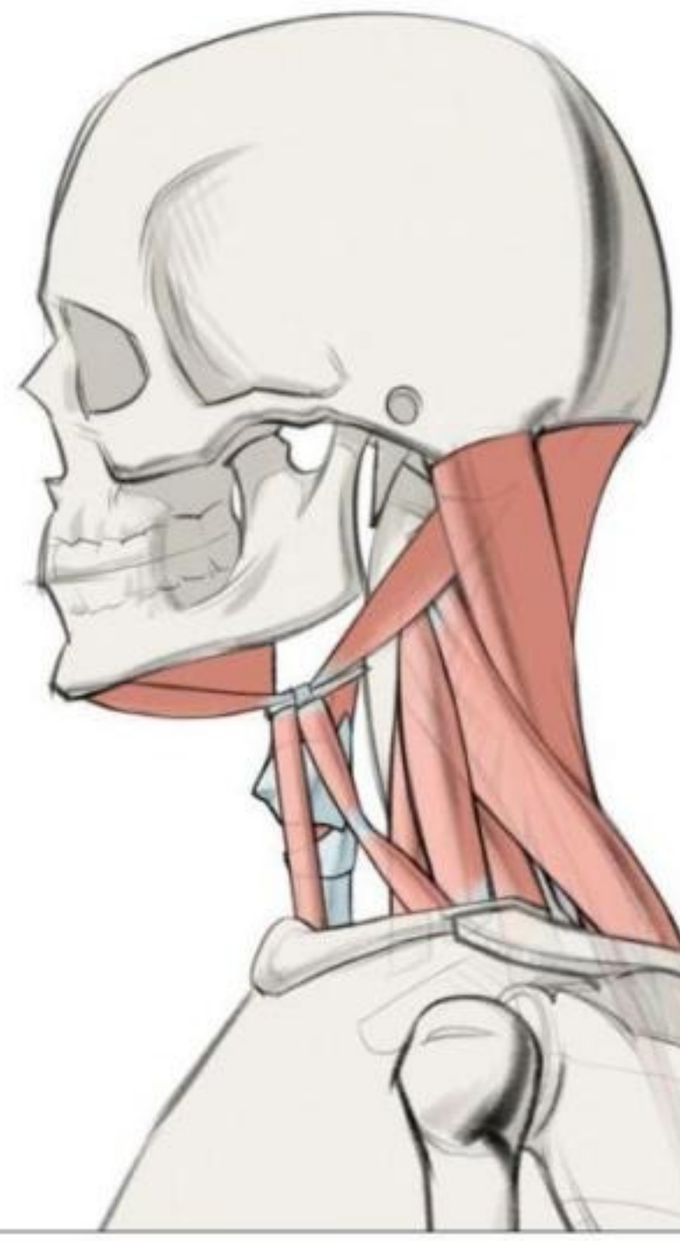
The human body is organic. It's full of curves, bumps and mushy-looking things. But your drawings shouldn't look mushy. You can try to copy exactly what you see, but if the understanding and accuracy isn't there, then it will show. A better approach is to learn to break down the body into simple forms. This is why I teach the simple form for all areas of the body. Simple forms are simple enough that you can actually memorise them, and pull them out of your pocket whenever you need to!

16 DON'T GUESS THE ATTACHMENTS

It's easy to tell when an artist doesn't know the skeleton, even just looking at their fully fleshed figures. The muscles won't aim to the right place. The skeleton is complicated, but there's much less variation in the forms of the skeleton than the forms of the muscles and body fat. Knowing the skeleton makes it easier to construct the body, understand how it works, and put the muscles on top of it correctly. Take the time to learn it and your drawings will benefit for the rest of your career.

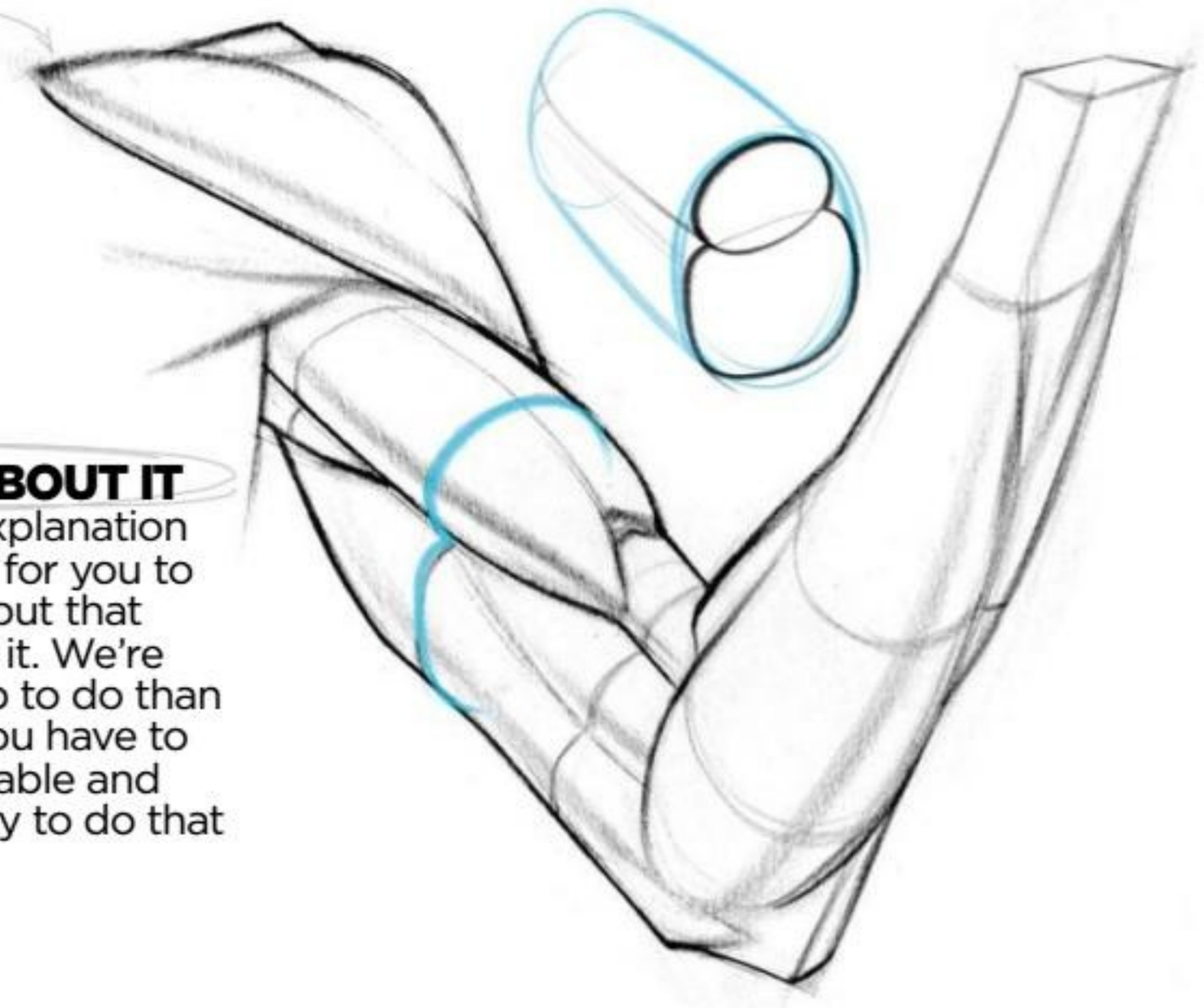


> "Knowing the skeleton makes it easier to construct the body and put the muscles on top"



17 ALWAYS CHECK YOUR WORK

After you finish a drawing, take a critical look at it to see where you can improve. You can ask a friend, mentor or online community for help. Then, actually follow through on what you notice, and make corrections to your drawings. It's not enough for your eyes to see what went wrong – your hands have to fix it. You can do this to yesterday's homework, or even drawings you made months or years ago.

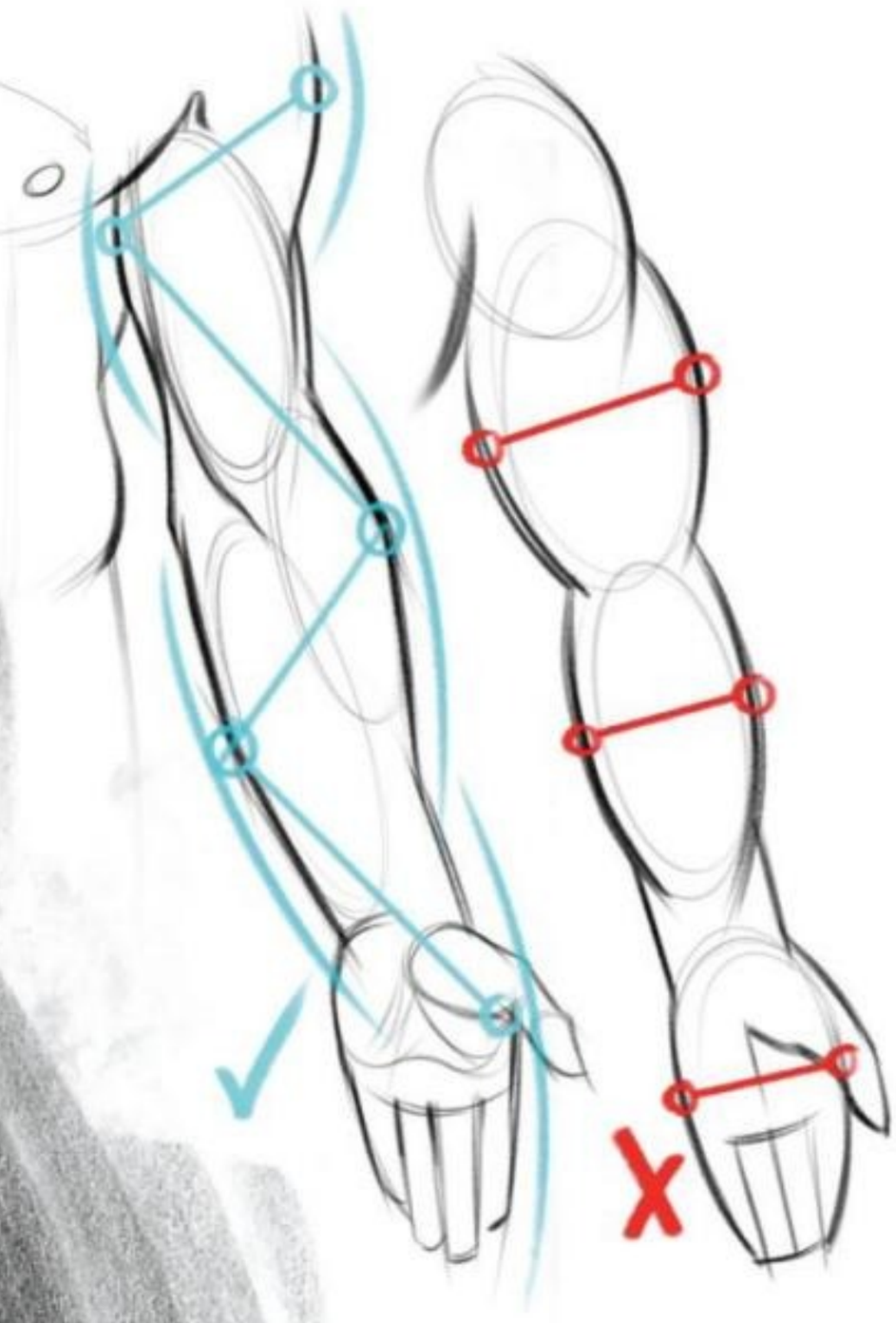


18 DON'T JUST READ ABOUT IT

Reading or listening to an explanation of anatomy may be enough for you to intellectually understand it, but that doesn't mean you can draw it. We're artists. We have a bigger job to do than just understand anatomy. You have to learn to draw it so it's believable and interesting. And the only way to do that is to draw. Draw a lot!

19 STEER CLEAR OF SNOWMEN

Don't draw symmetrical bulges everywhere. That makes your drawing look stiff and boring. The contours tend to zigzag down the body, creating a dynamic flow. Furthermore, muscles usually work in pairs. When one side flexes the other is resting.



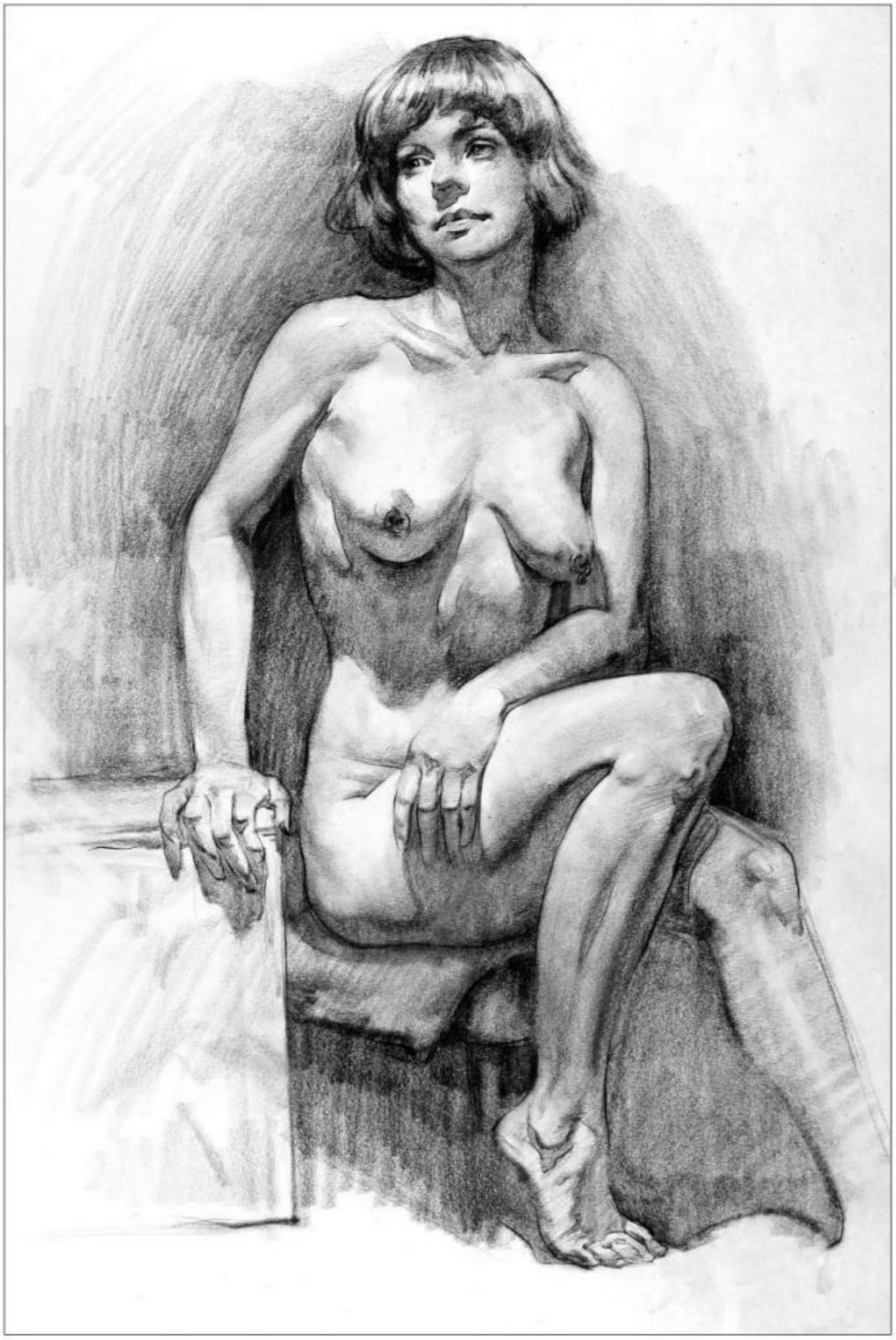
20 DON'T DRAW EVERY DETAIL

Simplify so the right anatomy can shine. Not every bones, tendon and muscles has to be accented in every drawing. Indeed, anatomical details in the wrong spots can make a drawing look stiff and fake. Pick and choose details that support the overall picture, and let those be enough. In general, you'll probably choose details that are at or near the focal point, and that flow with the gesture or composition.

GENERAL ADVICE

21 LEARN TO BE PATIENT

Learning anatomy is a slow process. Take your time with every drawing and with every area of the body. You can't learn everything in your first pass. You'll have to come back to review and add to your understand of all the parts every few years for the rest of your career. Don't expect to be a master immediately. Never stop learning.



22 BE GOAL-ORIENTED IN YOUR PRACTICE

There's a lot to anatomy to study and lots of aspects of it to study. For example, if you're practising gesture, the anatomy needs context. Make the forms work with the pose and focus on making the anatomy dynamic. If you're studying form, use cross contour lines and shading to add dimension. Focus on constructing the body parts using simple forms and avoid organic forms you don't understand. Pick a goal and focus on it. Make sure you're getting the most out of your practice time.

23 TRY DIFFERENT EXERCISES

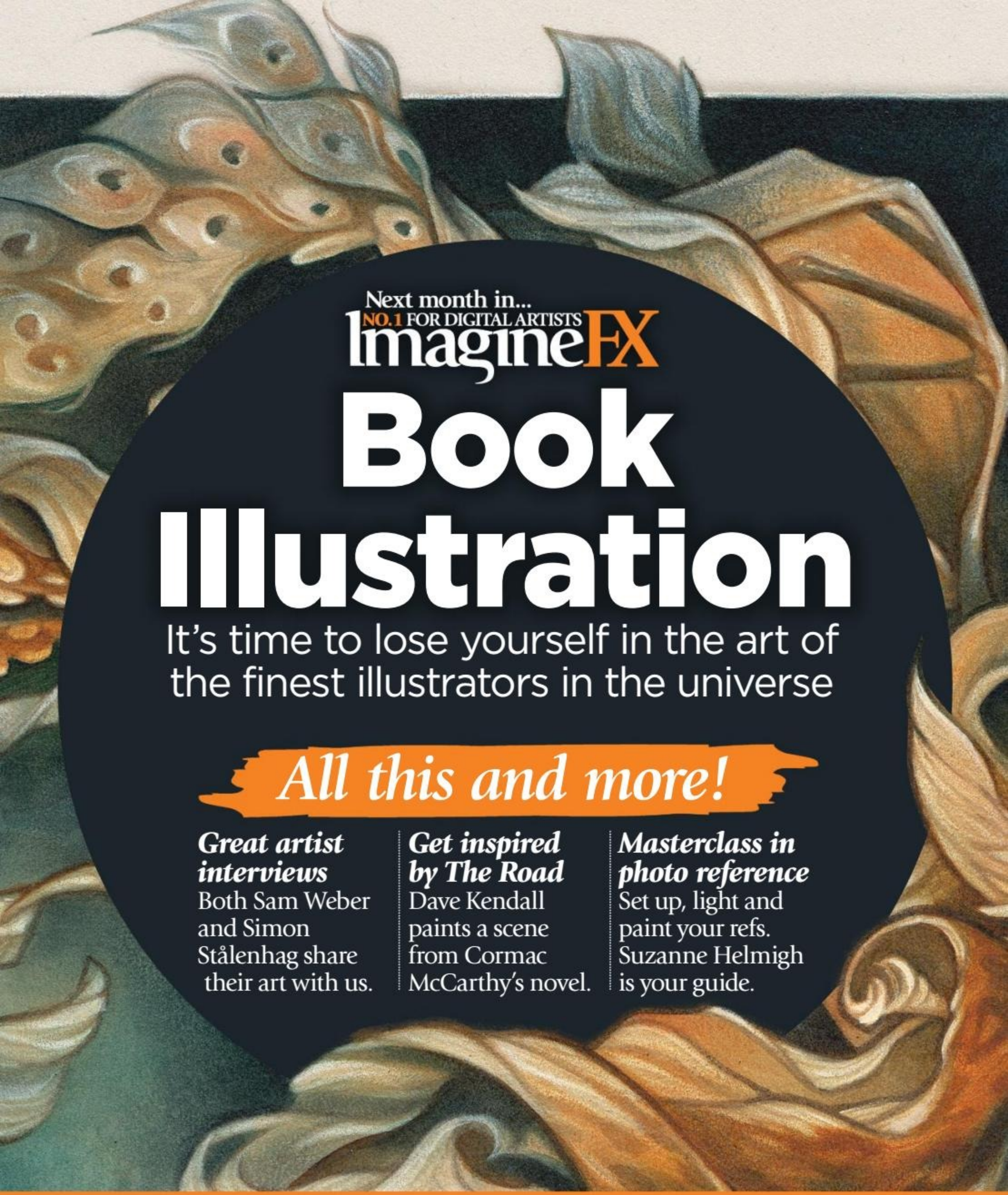
Anatomy tracings, drawing from life, drawing from photos, drawing from your imagination, drawing from other drawings (master copies), sculpture... Not only is this more fun, but it helps your brain process information in different ways, and fills in gaps in your knowledge.

“Pick a goal and focus on it. Ensure you’re getting the most out of your practice time”

24 GET TO GRIPS WITH THE LANGUAGE

There’s lots of memorisation with anatomy, and it can be overwhelming if you’re hearing all these terms for the first time. Terms like medial and lateral, abduction and adduction, origin and insertion, subcutaneous and so on. Consider making flashcards or other old-school study methods to help memorise the bulk of the terminology babble.

When you can speak about anatomy fluently, you can think about anatomy fluently, which means you’re going to have an easier time when you’re drawing. This is the least important part of anatomy for artists, but it sure is helpful. You’ll feel a lot better when you know the terms. And of course, you’ll leave your fellow spellers in the dust on Scrabble nights!



Next month in...

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

Book Illustration

It's time to lose yourself in the art of the finest illustrators in the universe

All this and more!

Great artist interviews
Both Sam Weber and Simon Stålenhag share their art with us.

Get inspired by The Road
Dave Kendall paints a scene from Cormac McCarthy's novel.

Masterclass in photo reference
Set up, light and paint your refs. Suzanne Helmigh is your guide.

ISSUE 159 ON SALE IN THE UK *23 February 2018*

Follow artist **Wylie Beckert** as she creates her ethereal art for our cover.

Photoshop

FROM GREYSCALE TO FULL COLOUR

Pick up a quick and easy method for colourising greyscale pieces for any painting style or workflow, from pro illustrator **Stephan McGowan**

Artist PROFILE

Stephan McGowan
LOCATION: Canada

Stephan is a professional studio concept artist and illustrator working at Atomhawk Montreal.
http://ifxm.ag/s-mcg

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

For this workshop, I'll be taking you through the tools and techniques that I use for creating full-colour images from a greyscale line art starting point. This method will work with any layer setup, workflow and brushes, and I'll be demonstrating my approach using Photoshop's default tools.

Some previous knowledge of how to use masks and layer groups is useful to have before going into this tutorial, but experience using them within a workflow isn't necessary. You'll notice that I point out my personal preferences when tackling a certain step. Nothing's set in stone, especially where painting is concerned, so feel free to adapt my approaches to your own creative workflow!

PRO SECRETS

Adjustment layer options

I like to use adjustment layers because they are a non-destructive way of colourising. Furthermore, I can either go back into them and adjust them after I have more tones down or pile them on top of each other for better effect. This is true whether I'm colourising or just adjusting the balance of my work.

1 Starting my painting

I found an ink drawing that I love from fellow artist Hunter Bonyun (**www.artstation.com/hunterbonyun**). I start by scanning this drawing. My setup is really straightforward. I'm going to be using a few layers for various items, as this is how I like to work.

2 Put down some base tones

I have a pretty basic idea for what I want the tones to be. My image is going to be really dark and deal mostly in shadows, so I'll probably need to adjust them again. If you're not sure what tones you're going to need and want to make a mostly single tone image to brighten or darken later, you can work this way as well without issue.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: DEFAULT HARD ROUND

I use this default brush with no Spacing and Transfer activated.

HARD ROUND

I love this brush because it creates smooth strokes that are easy to control.

3 Shading approach

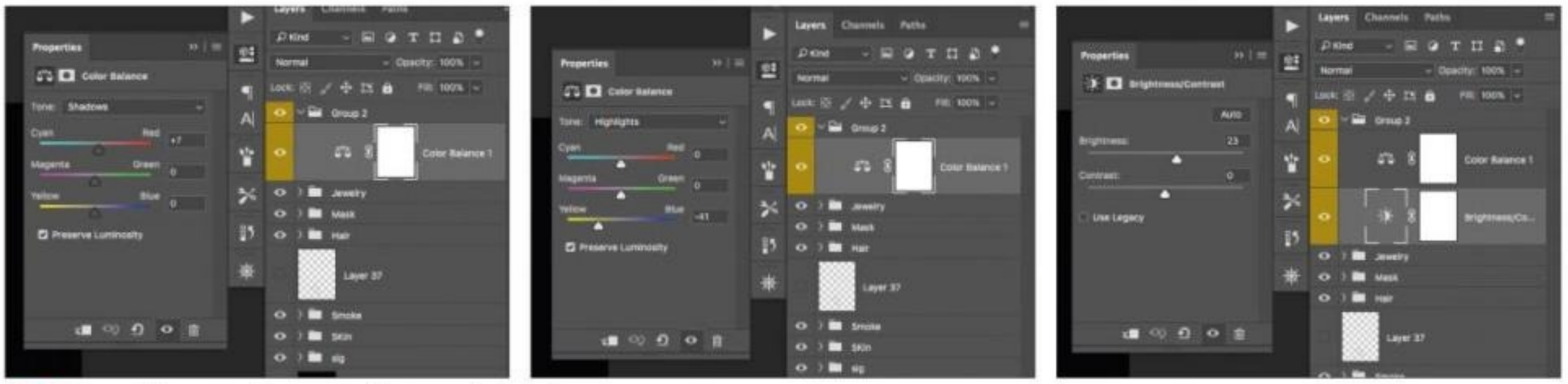
I'm going to be working mostly with shadows for this image and prefer to paint strong highlights after colour, but this is a personal workflow preference and you can go as far as you want with the rendering. If I'm doing work for a client, I'll try to go further during this stage in the process. Whatever style and however you want to go about shading your image is totally fine.

4 Complete the base shading

This is as far as I'm going to take my base shading for this particular image. At this stage, the image should largely be able to stand on its own and just need a polish. This is entirely my personal preference, though. You can choose to keep going, but this is going to be the last stage of my black and white render.

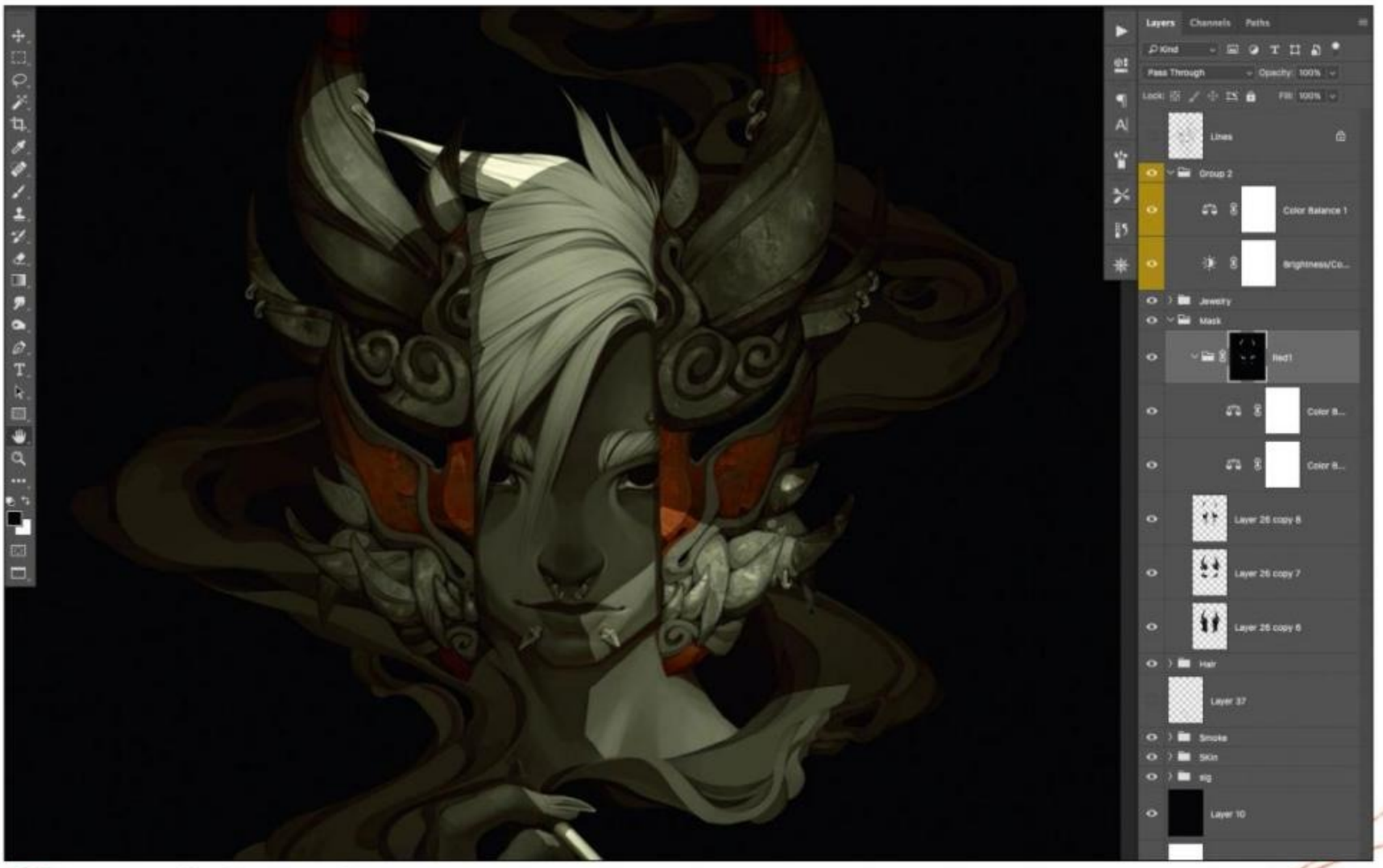
5 Introducing the undertones

The first thing I want to do is to set the undertones of my image. I'll often put this underneath all my colour adjustment layers, but for this image I'm going to keep it on top so that it's always adjusting my shadow, mid-tone and highlight colours. Even in a grey image, I'm going to make sure that I never actually have any grey present.



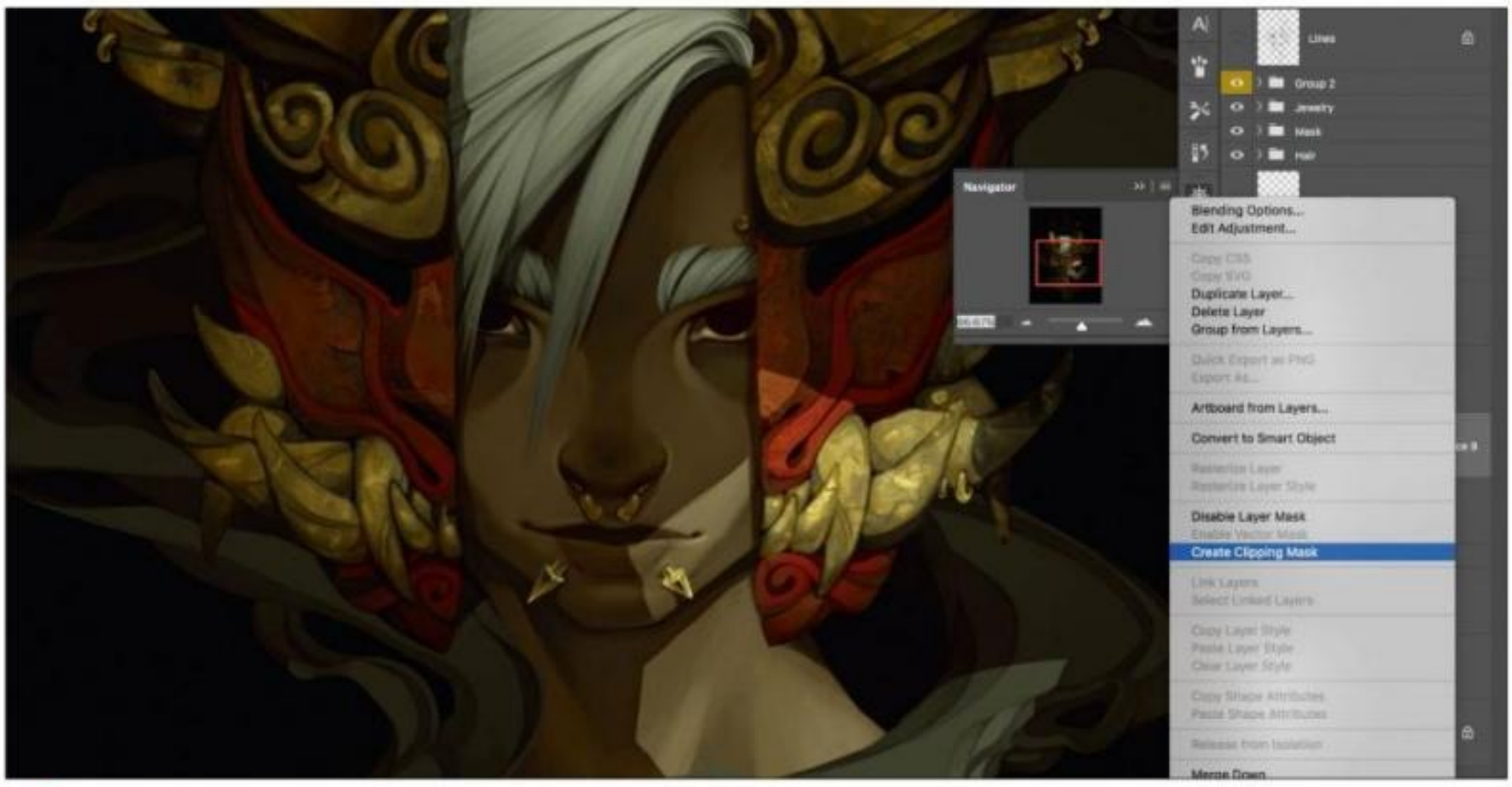
6 Creating and arranging colours in groups

To proceed, I'm going to create a new group folder. Each of my folders generally acts as one "colour" and I will use adjustment layers together to create them. I'm a particular fan of colour balance so that I can create colour variation in the shadows, mid-tones and highlights, rather than throwing a flat colour across an entire object.



7 Lay out all of your colours

Now I just go through and I do this for each of the base items that I have in my image. The mask, hair, smoke, skin, cigarette and jewellery are the layer groups that I've chosen to start with. If you've gone all the way with your render, then there's a good chance that you'll have many more groups for all of the pieces in your image.



8 Creating Colours as Clipping Masks

If you've separated out objects into layers then you can save yourself some painting time and just use clipping masks instead of groups. I've chosen to do this in places where only one adjustment layer is necessary. To create a clipping mask, place your adjustment layer above the layer you want it to clip to, right-click and select Create Clipping Mask. I still mask out areas of colour on a mask attached to the clipping mask.

PRO SECRETS

Take care with photo textures

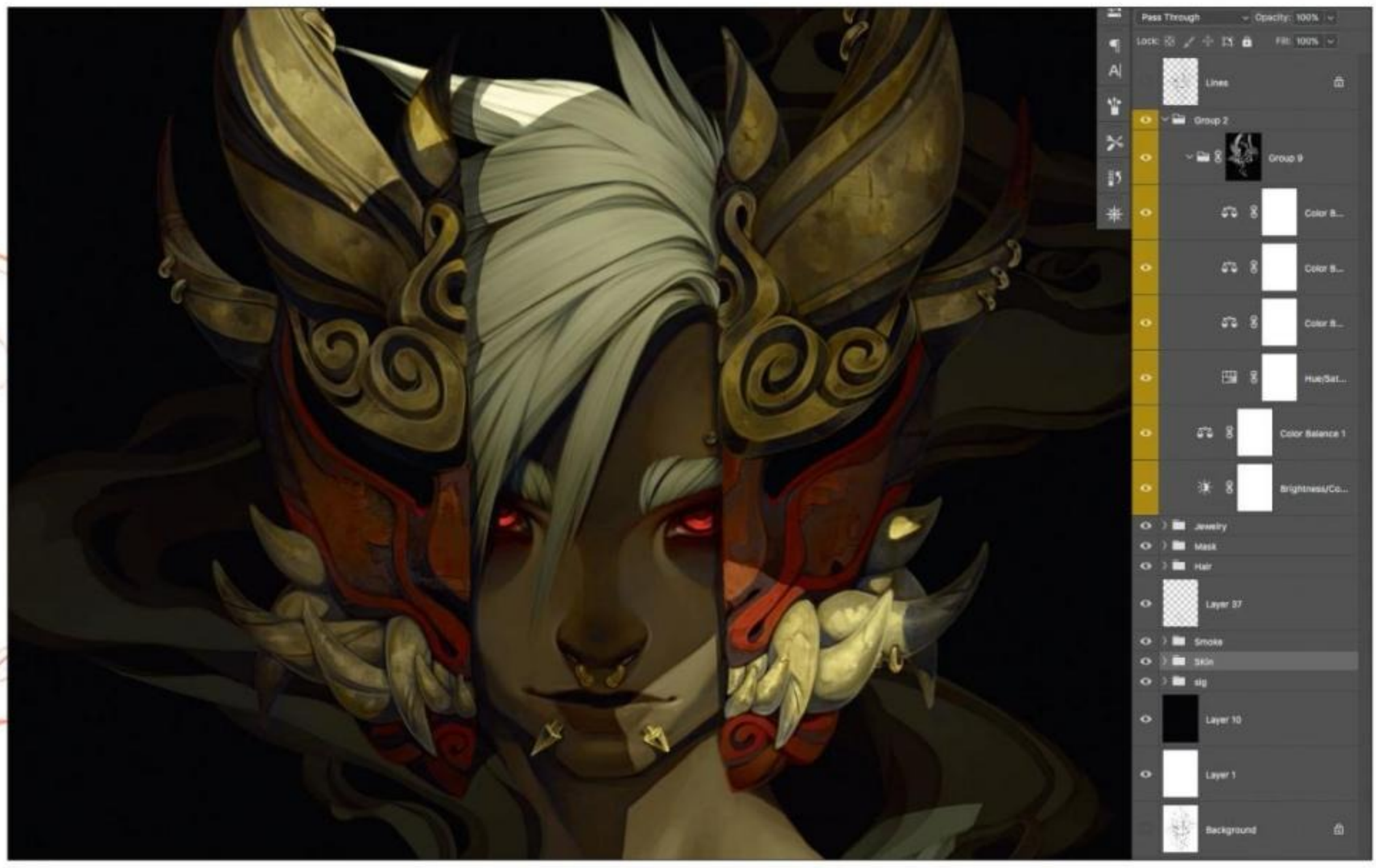
If I'm working with photo textures within a painterly styled piece, then it's crucial that I never leave them as is, or as the final step in texturing. Painting on top of the textures enables me to create a tactile feeling without the dissonance of combining photo realism with non-realistic pieces.

9 Bringing in additional colours

I don't have many extra elements that I want to add to my colours at this point. I paint in the eyes and add a bit of red to the eye using a Multiply layer. Other things I might add at this stage are a blush, freckles and patchy looking skin. Areas where picking up the colour below rather than over-riding it is an asset.

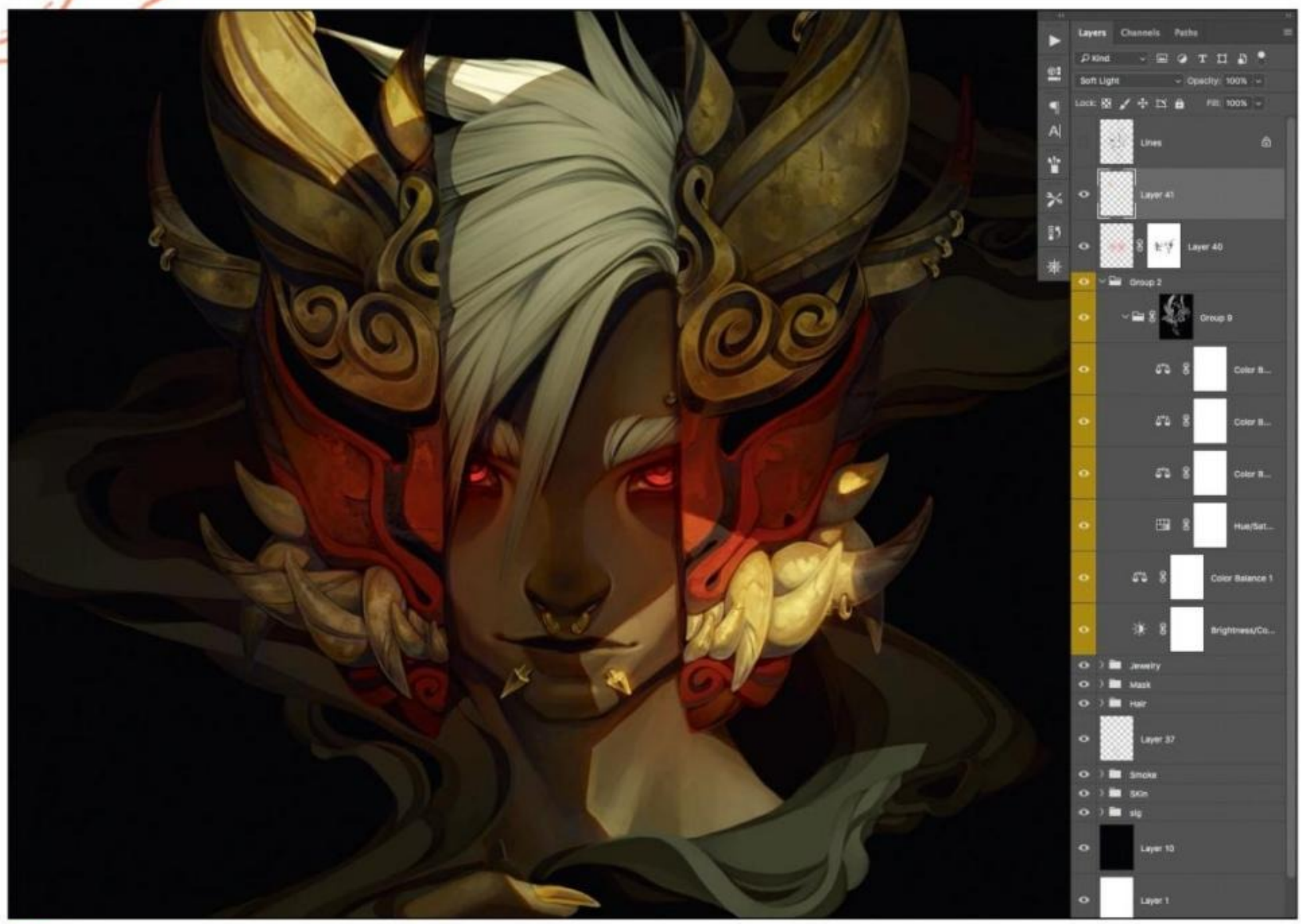
10 Keep on painting

Now that I have the base colours that I want in place, I'm going to paint again on top to hand blend, clean up and add highlights to all the work I've set up so far. I plan to do another small pass after all of my adjustments and lighting have been completed. If you're colourising a rendered piece then you can skip this stage.



11 Carry out colour correction

The image is a little too yellow-green and I want to bring in a bit more grey. So I create another group in my overtone group, using a purple-blue to contrast the green. I mask this in as I've done for every other colour, choosing to paint into areas of the shadows and green.



12 Final colour effects

I want to override some of my undertones and pull more of a red-bloom into the mask and eyes. I'm going to do this by using a medium-red soft light. This is not dark or light enough to change the values, and will be colourful enough to add a red wash. I do the same in areas of light on the gold for a bloom effect, but without adding in more highlights.

13 Paint it out again!

It's time to add my final painting layer. This is the last level of detail and cleanup. I don't do this step until all my colour information is in place, but if you did work with a fully-rendered image, you can use this time to adjust areas of colour that you may want to be crisper.

14 Final effects

Now I add in anything that was never going to be part of the colourisation process, regardless of render level or method. In this case it's my ember effects. Make sure to get your work signed and then you're good to go!

PRO SECRETS

Local colour is a good answer

Trying to get all of the colours to feel right more or less on your first try can be overwhelming. So my method can be used to put down local colours instead. You can then adjust them after the image is in place without any destructive or negative effects.

Core Skills: Part 7

RENDER YOUR ART IN ZBRUSHCORE

Pablo Muñoz Gómez closes his series on ZBrushCore by going through a process for presenting your creations in a more visually appealing way

Artist **PROFILE**

Pablo Muñoz Gómez
LOCATION: Australia

Pablo is a concept artist and animator. He's also an instructor in 3D techniques, and enjoys passing this knowledge on to his students.
www.zbrushguides.com

BPR is the rendering process in ZBrushCore. It stands for Best Preview Render and the process of creating a render is as simple as pressing the BPR button at the top right of the interface. This produces a high-quality image that you can then export.

ZBrushCore tends to simplify all of its processes, which is why there aren't many settings you can tweak in the Render palette. However, since the rendering stage is all about producing a good-looking image of your model, we need to consider other aspects that affect the render such as the Material type, lighting and shadows.

There are two types of materials in ZBrushCore: MatCaps and Standard Materials. The main difference is that the Standard Materials react to the position of the light source, whereas the MatCaps (Material Capture) have the lighting and colour information already baked in.

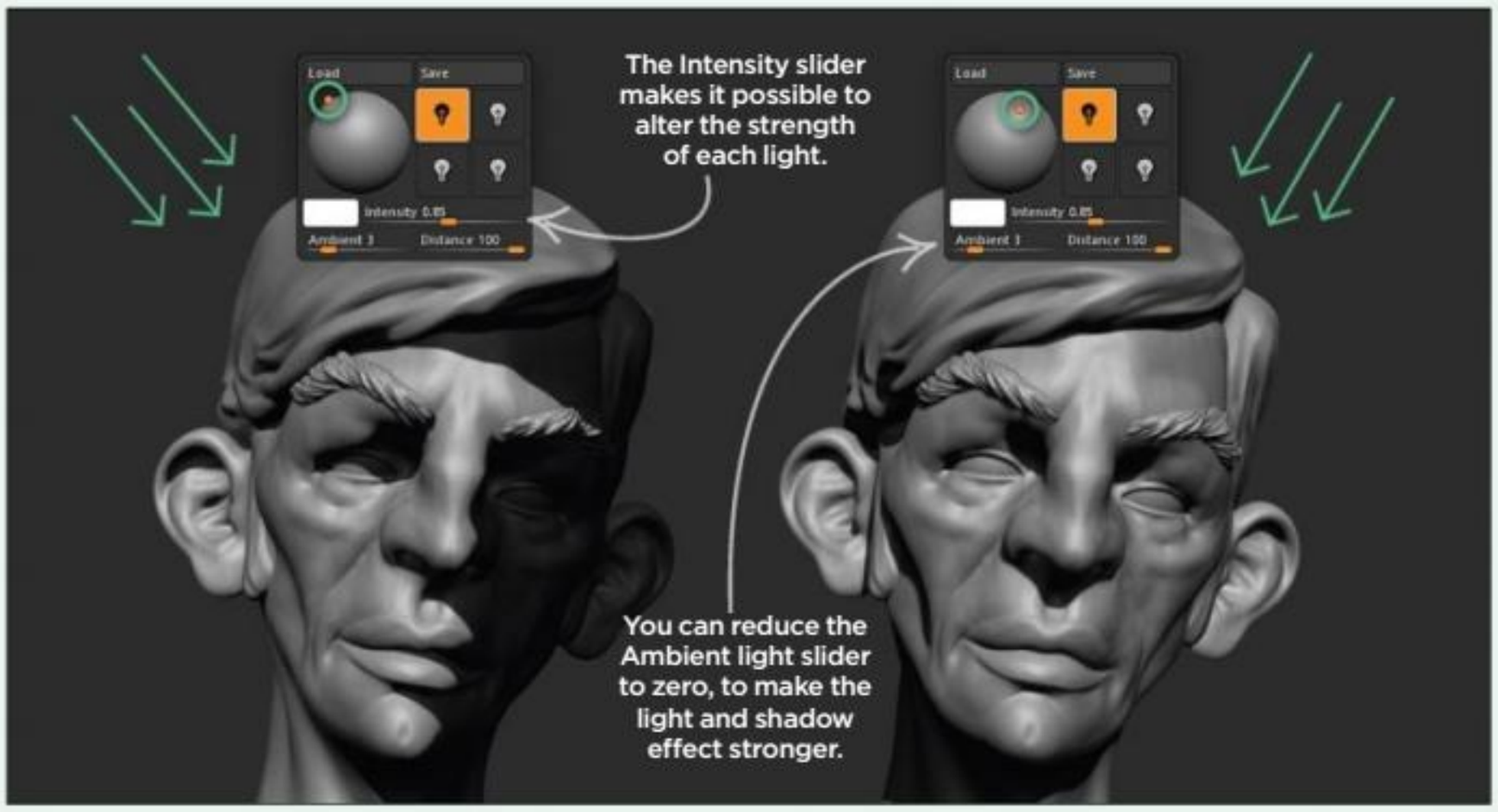
The process of adding or positioning a light is very simple and there's even a dedicated palette for it. If we choose to use a MatCap, then the effect of the light won't be visible until we create the render.

Higher values will produce an exaggerated perspective in the image.

Pressing the Align to Object button enables you to place the model near the corners without additional distortion.

1 Camera setup

Before we hit that Render button, we need to choose a camera angle that works for our model. The size of the canvas is the size for the render. With that in mind, go ahead and rotate the model to find a view that you like. Open the Draw palette and use the Angle of View. This is essentially like tweaking a camera lens to change the perspective and how much of the 'scene' is captured by the lens.


Load
Save
Intensity 0.85
Ambient 3
Distance 100
The Intensity slider makes it possible to alter the strength of each light.
You can reduce the Ambient light slider to zero, to make the light and shadow effect stronger.

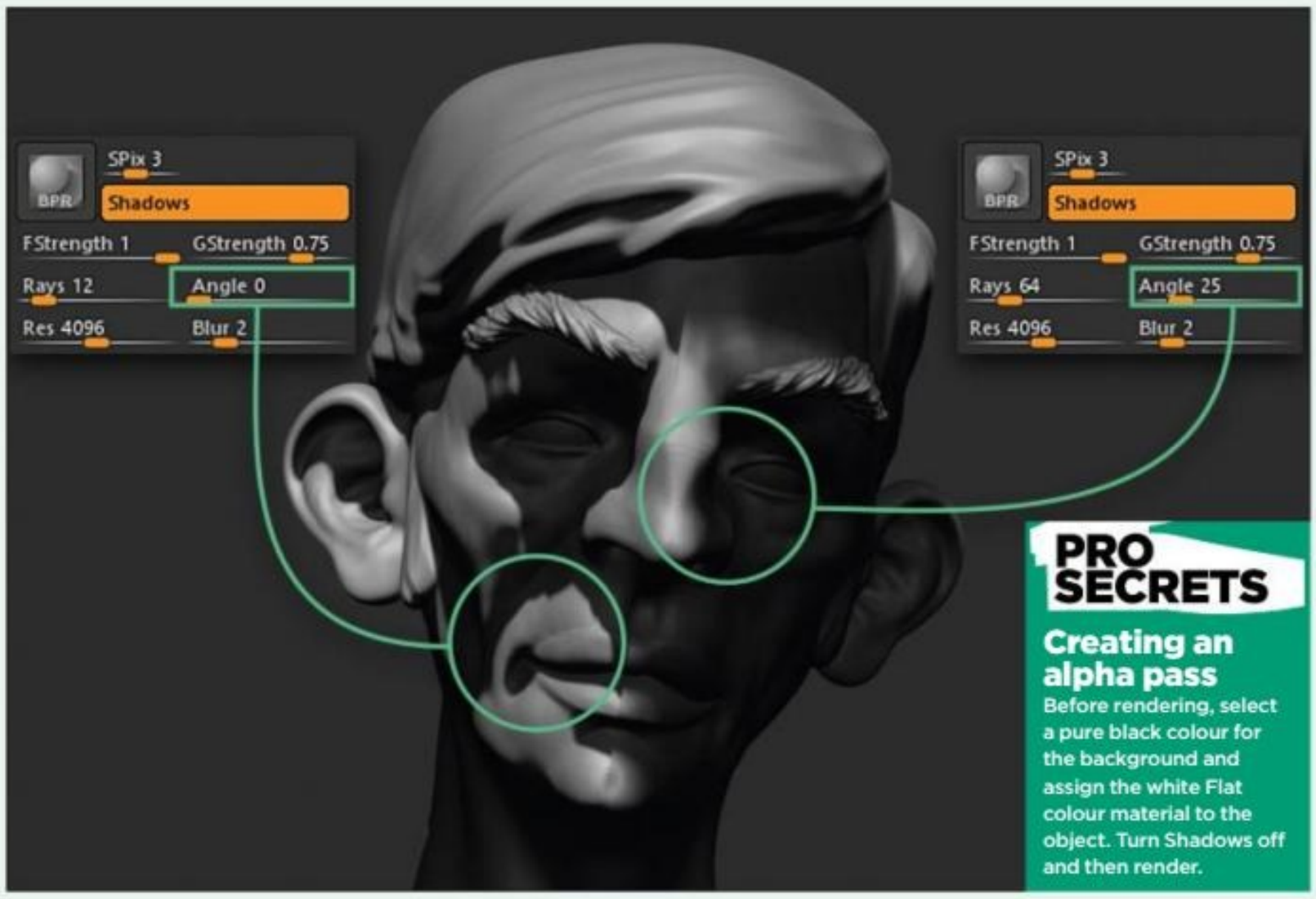
2 Lighting options

To start tweaking the light sources, dock the Light palette to the right tray and click the BPR button for a quick render test. Each switch with a lightbulb represents a light, and by default there's only one enabled. Click the thumbnail with the sphere to move the yellow dot around: this represents the position of the light. Do another quick BPR test so you can see the difference.

Clicking once without dragging the dot from the light palette will send the light to the back.

3 Shadow Properties

The PBR Shadows slider will determine how sharp or soft the cast shadows will be. A higher value will create smoother shadows, but you might need to increase the number of Rays to avoid artefact. You will only see the effect of changing the Shadows slider after running a quick BPR test. Turning the Floor off before rendering enables you to render without casting shadows on to the floor.



If the shadow on the floor looks cut off, try increasing the size of the floor grid from the Draw palette.

Keep in mind that Increasing the number of Rays, will make the soft shadows more accurate, but also the render time will

PRO SECRETS

Creating an alpha pass

Before rendering, select a pure black colour for the background and assign the white Flat colour material to the object. Turn Shadows off and then render.

Mrgb
Rgb
M
Zadd
Zsub
You can also click the Brush icon from the Subtool list to turn the assigned polypaint and material on or off.
To remove an assigned material, you need to assign the Flat Color material first.

Document
Export
Back
Border
Border2
Range 0
Center 0.75
Rate 0.25
You can change the background colour before rendering from the 'back' swatch under the Document palette.
Increasing the value of the SPix slider in the render Palette will create smoother edges when rendering.

4 Material options

To select a different material, choose it from the Material palette or the Material thumbnail at the left of the UI. If you have multiple subtools and you want different materials between subtools, you need to assign the materials. Turn on the M switch at the top of the interface and make sure the RGB one is off. Then go to the Color Palette, and click the FillObject button. Now if you select a different material, you'll see that the object you just 'filled' stays with the previous material.

5 Render and then Export

Finally, once you've chosen your camera angle, tested your light position, tweaked shadow properties and assigned your materials, it's time to render your image. Fortunately, we've done all the heavy lifting and the rendering process just involves pressing the BPR button and waiting while ZBrushCore does its thing. If you're happy with the result, go to the Document palette, click the Export button and save your render as a PSD file.

Photoshop

PAINT DRAMATIC LIGHT & SHADOWS

Luisa Preissler deploys her lighting skills to complement the composition and maximise the sense of atmosphere and intrigue in a fantasy portrait

Artist **PROFILE**

Luisa Preissler
LOCATION: Germany

Luisa is a freelance fantasy illustrator who creates book covers, card art and illustrations for pen and paper RPGs.
www.luisapreissler.de

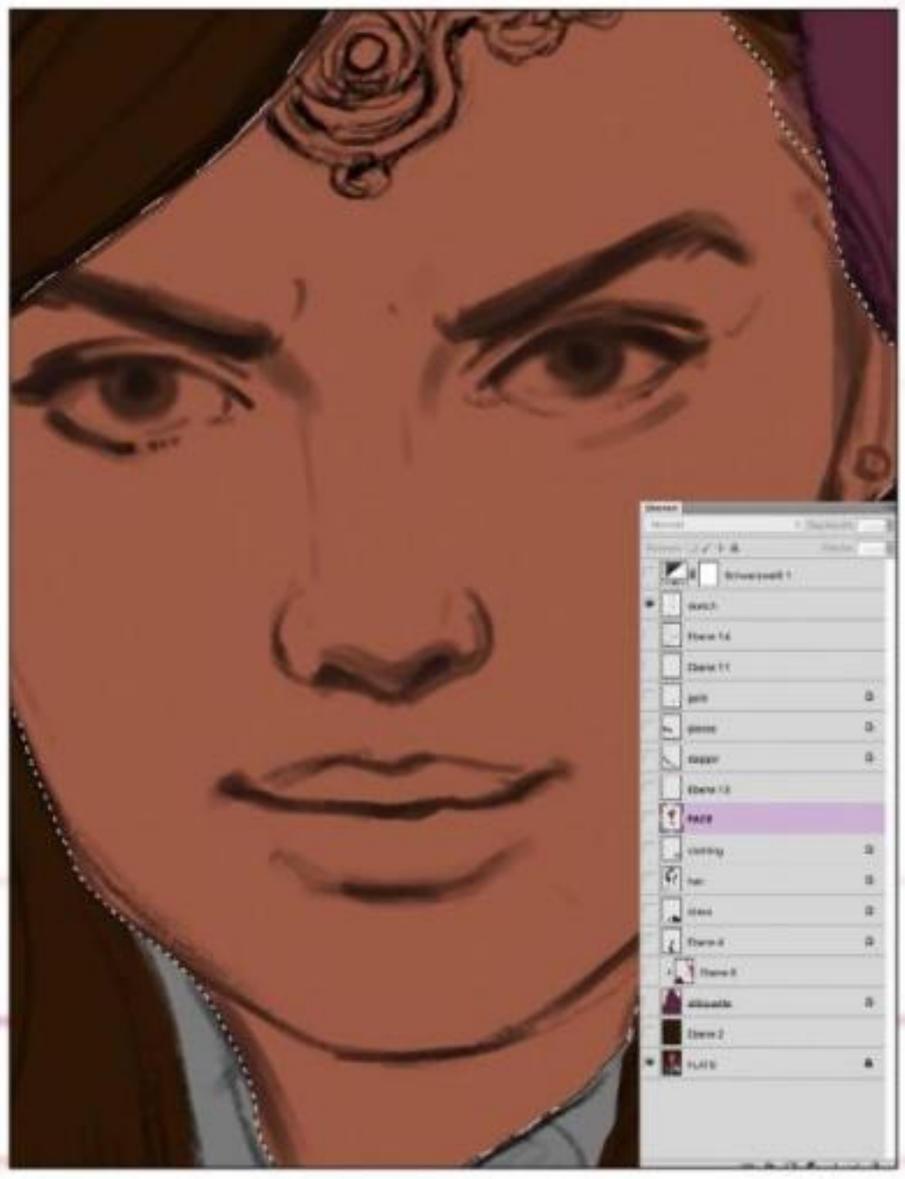
GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Painting a believable face is one of the hardest things any artist can attempt. The face will be the focal point of almost any illustration, but it doesn't end there.

Faces don't simply float on an empty canvas without context. This is your chance to add layers of storytelling to your portrait. A key factor is either choosing a dramatic and atmospheric lighting scenario that can make colours pop through warm or cool lights, or obscure parts of the face with shadow to make other parts more interesting.

The painting is your stage and you can ramp up the drama through varied rendering of details, facial expression, objects, clothing or even particle effects. My job is clear: choose early on what kind of mood I'm going for, stick to that vision and use all my tricks of the trade to create an eye-catching portrait.

In this workshop I'll reveal the key steps of my creative process, from line art to final painting. I'll show you how to use flat colours for easy selections, incorporate reference to push verisimilitude and where to put details (and where to omit them!). So let's jump in at the very start. Join me as I take this piece from a blank layer to a pleasing finish!



PRO SECRETS

Place detail in the focus area

Pick out a limited number of focus areas and render them with extra care. For example, the cloth doesn't have to be detailed everywhere in the picture, but I want it to be detailed around her face and also on the right arm. The left arm is completely in shadow and can be rendered with between five and 10 big brushstrokes.

1 Sketch out the idea

I always start with a clean line art sketch, which helps me to figure out the composition and details as early as possible. This doesn't have to be pretty: it's more like a framework that guides me through the painting process. At this point I already have a rough colour version in my head and can't wait to dive into the painting stage.

2 Bring in flat colours

I continue laying in areas of flat colour that I can use later to select the main areas of the picture. I select each element with the Selection tool and fill in the colours on a layer beneath the line art layer, which I set to Multiply. Creating these selections enables me to work quickly and without risk of painting over the lines.

3 Determine the lighting scheme

Now I paint my general idea for the lighting scheme. I want to play with how the hood casts a shadow on her face and so I opt for a warm light coming from the right. Her face is three-quarters lit and the light casts a shadow on to her left cheek. This leaves a triangle of light on the shaded side. I use a large brush to boldly block in the shapes.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: PAINT SOFT

This brush helps me paint smooth transitions between skin tones.

PAINT 01

Ideal for rendering cloth; helps you avoid a look that's too plastic or clean.

LEATHER

A slightly grainy brush. Good for adding texture to leather materials, say.

4 Modelling the face

The face is the most important part of the painting so I take my time rendering it. I think about where cast shadows and form shadows will be. Cast shadows are shadows that are created by something blocking the light source, such as the hood that the character's wearing. They're usually sharper than form shadows, which are created by light not reaching around the object. I make sure to use saturated colours in the shadows.

PRO SECRETS

It's a process

I don't have the final image perfectly in my head at the beginning. Multiple times during the painting process I want to vent my frustration and throw my piece into the digital trash bin. It helps to accept that these moments will come. That's usually when you need to take a step back, evaluate and rework until you find a solution.

5 Illustrating the essence of the eyes

It's important to get the eyes right, since they're a major focal point. It's not the iris that should be rendered out most, but rather the area around the eye: it gives us the most info about its three dimensionality. Look at the work of the Old Masters to study how softly they paint the eye itself, leaving the hardest edge for the reflection in the eye.

6 Shoot your own references

The glove is another central element and I want to paint the material as believably as possible. I quickly shoot some reference of a leather glove with the same lighting setting and use it as a guide. It doesn't matter that the real glove has the wrong colour – what's important are the highlights, shadows and where the texture shows. Shooting your own reference will push your art to the next level.

7 Rendering the dagger

The dagger is next in line for a makeover. I can't decide on the colour of the hilt so I try out silver. I know I can easily change it later on with a Color layer, so I'm happy to just start rendering. Now the selections I created earlier come in handy, especially with the sharp-edged blade. I add small engravings to make it look more exotic.

8 Changing the hood shape

The round hood shape strikes me as too tame, so I make it more triangular. The effect is two-fold: the hood now looks more dramatic, and there's a greater sense of realism because there are parts of the cloth supported by the shoulders, which push the tip of the hood up. It also conceals her hair to a greater degree. Don't be afraid to make changes late in the game as long as they benefits your piece. ➤➤

9 Add some freckles

I'm still not done with the face and go back to it frequently – fixing things and adding more details. I jump around the painting a fair bit, often flipping it horizontally, and watch it slowly come together. I decide to add some freckles to give her face an interesting texture. Small details like this add realism and believability.

10 Further rendering

I push and pull the values, experimenting with Overlay layers to darken some areas and brighten others. Then I finally add the background. This just consists of some shapes and textures, indicating a wall tapestry. It's a supporting actor to the face, so I can paint it roughly and with soft edges. Her clothing is in dire need of some rendering, so I dedicate a little more time to it.

11 Let's add something shiny!

I've almost forgotten about the jewellery from the original sketch! I paint in the headpiece's shape, lock the layer's Transparency and detail it out. Then I add a layer underneath and paint in the shadows. The earrings are mostly in shadow, so they should be less detailed. I also add an ornamental rim around her hood to add even more visual interest.

PRO SECRETS

Make a checklist

When I'm nearing the end of my painting process, I draw up a checklist of things that I mustn't forget to do, before I send the piece to the client. This includes: check the edges; watch out for tangents; look for over-rendered elements that distract from the main focal point; put a grainy texture on top of everything; and more!

12 Edges are key

Because of the selection method I used, I end up with razor-sharp edges everywhere. Not ideal! I make sure to soften all edges that are not in the focal area and also the ones that are in shadow. I use either the Smudge tool , or just go over the edges with a slightly textured, softer brush.

13 Add light and particles

As I near the end I try to push the mood and atmosphere even further by adding an additional lighting layer on Overlay, making the light spill over the painting. Because of the values and direction of the light, this brings even more attention to her face. Some tiny dust particles create additional visual interest and atmosphere.

14 Final touches

The painting is almost done and so I just need to make some final corrections. The left eye could be a little lower, so I cut it out and move it down a few pixels. I bend the hood shape on the character's right to a more natural curve, and then check for sharp edges and stray pixels that I've overlooked. Let your painting rest for a day. Then, if it still looks okay, celebrate and call it done!

Photoshop

HOW TO CONVEY SIZE AND SCALE IN YOUR ART

Working with atmospheric perspective and relative scale, **Ilse Gort** is able to illustrate truly enormous dragons

Artist PROFILE

Ilse Gort
LOCATION:
The Netherlands

Ilse is a concept artist and freelance illustrator with a love for fantasy, cats and craft beers.
http://ifxm.ag/i-gort

The greatest aspect of fantasy art, to me, is the opportunity it provides to step outside of ourselves for a brief moment. It evokes our sense of empathy, imagination, curiosity and awe, and can leave us feeling as if we were a child again, gazing upon something new that we feel a need to explore and learn more about.

Of all the mythological creatures that exist in the world, dragons must be one of the most efficient ones at stirring those feelings, because they have inspired stories and drawings for centuries all across the world. They were my inspiration for that very reason, to aid my endeavour to create an image that would leave the viewer awestruck and wanting to know more.

All good fantasy art has its roots in reality. This usually means there will be people or objects that we're familiar with, placed among the unfamiliar to give us a frame of reference for size, environment and feeling. In this case it also refers to the relationship between two creatures.

Most will understand the concept of riding animals and dragon riders are nothing new in the world of fantasy. But what if that relationship is not as obvious anymore? Who is in control, or is there any control to begin with? Questions such as those, combined with the aforementioned thoughts, are what drive much of my personal work.

Atmospheric perspective

Also called aerial perspective, this describes the effect that causes faraway objects to take on the dominant colour of the atmosphere. In daylight, the object will become brighter and lose contrast and saturation. A foggy or dusty atmosphere will intensify the effect.

Depicting dragon scales

The scales were painted from the bottom up, starting with the lighter base colour for the skin and placing the darker scales on top. For a more organic, rugged look, I made sure to keep the smaller scales uneven and purposely left small areas of skin exposed.

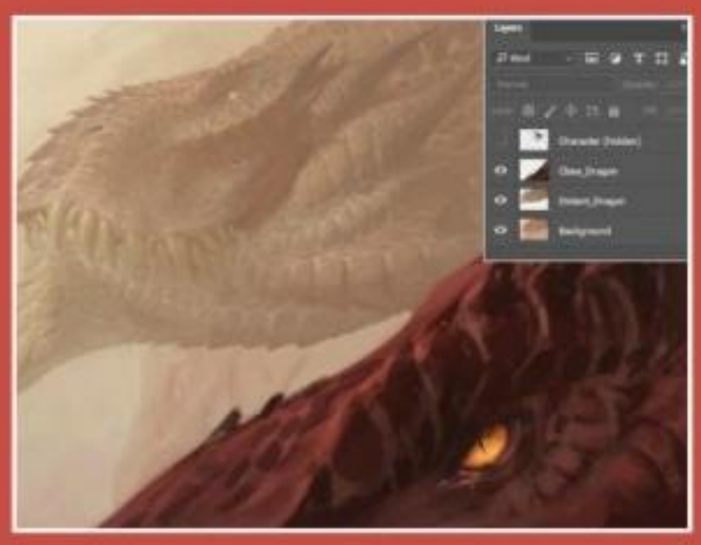
Repeat for depth

Aside from birds (and people) for scale, repeating elements are a great tool for creating depth in your piece. Having an object in your foreground and seeing that same object smaller and further away in the background helps our brains to register the distance between them.

How I create...
A DETERMINED DRAGON RIDER

1 Visualising my idea

Starting with a rough thumbnail, I attempt to capture the complete look and feel of the piece as I see it in my mind on a small scale, focusing only on colour, contrast and the flow and placement of the main shapes in the image.



2 Back to front

My process varies as I experiment and follow my intuition. One consistent aspect, however, is that I use minimal layers and work my way towards the foreground, using the background and overall environment to set the tone and detail level of the piece.

3 Clear focus

When the piece nears completion, I zoom in on the focal points and ensure that they have clear edges and a higher level of detail than the rest of the illustration. This further emphasises their focus and gives the piece a neatly finished appearance.

Convincing hands and feet

They are tough to draw for most, but these will add a lot to the overall look of your piece if drawn well. Take your time to work them out, find references to inform your drawing, or take photos of yourself.

Thoughtful details

Certain small details can help to make your image and designs just that little bit more interesting. The cuticles on the dragon's plating and the second sideways eyelid are ways of showing that I put thought into the physiology of the dragons.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

SOFTWARE

CUSTOM BRUSHES: SQUARE TEXTURE

SQUARE SMOOTH

These are the brushes I use for almost all of my of my work. They enable me to achieve most of the effects I need, and I find that using square brushes for rendering gives digital painting a slightly more traditional look.

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

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EDGES
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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX Reviews

Artist's Choice Award
Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...

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Android artists catch up with their iOS counterparts, as the latest version of Autodesk's popular app is finally unveiled.

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Concept artist John Wallin Liberto steps into the future with plenty of advice on how to paint a stunning sci-fi cityscape.

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96 Jamie Hewlett
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97 The Ultimate Concept Art Career Guide
Want to become a concept artist? This book, featuring lots of pro advice, explains what it takes to succeed in the industry.

97 Martin Deschambault: Project 77
In ArtStation's first published book, take a trip to the cut-throat world of Project 77 – a design and concept art passion project.

RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent ★★★★ Great ★★★ Good ★★ Poor ★ Atrocious

Artist Ryohei Yamashita is able to bring his traditional media skills into SketchBook, thanks in part to the app's configurable Ink brush.

SketchBook 4.0 for Android

TOP DRAW After a lengthy wait, Android artists catch up with their iOS counterparts as the latest version of Autodesk's popular app is unveiled

Price Free; Pro Tools, £4.09; Subscription, £24.99 a year **Company** Autodesk **Web** www.sketchbook.com

Any Android owners who feel a sense of competition with their iPad-wielding counterparts may be slightly irked that SketchBook 4.0 is only appearing on their platform months after it launched on iOS. But set any irritation aside, and you'll discover a compelling update with some features mobile artists will greatly appreciate.

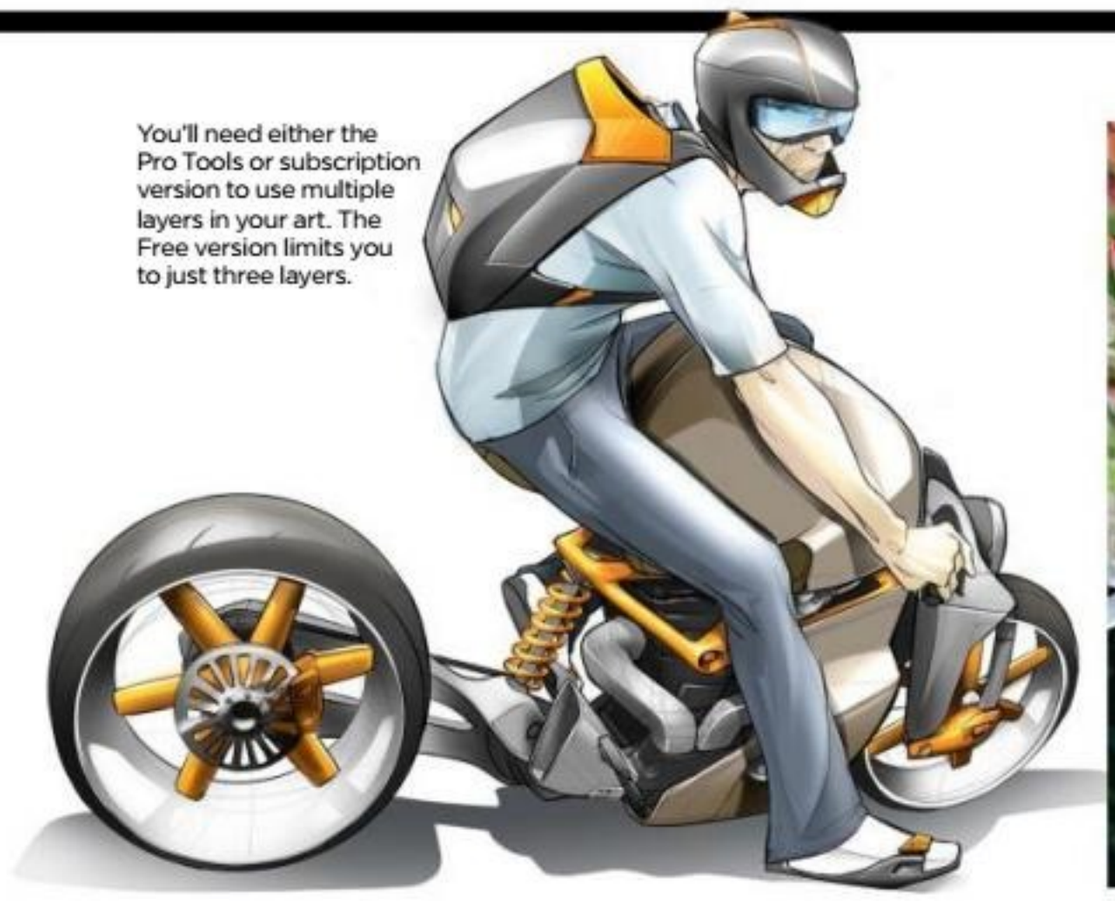
Chief among these is a revamped user interface that stays out of your way as you work. It vanishes if your brushstrokes veers near one of its tool panels, and many interface elements are reduced in scale. This makes some controls, like the drawers for adjusting Brush size and Opacity, a little fiddly to access, however. Tap near the centre-bottom of the screen, meanwhile, and a menu with shortcuts appears.

The app enables you to choose from over 130 brush presets, and also gives you the chance to use Copic markers, which are exclusive to SketchBook.

When you first install SketchBook it's the Free edition, with limited functionality but no time limit on how long you can use it. To unlock the full toolset, you have two options: you can either spend £4.09 on the Pro Tools in-app purchase, which gives you the tools only within the Android app; or get an annual SketchBook subscription (£4.09 a month or £24.99 a year) via **www.sketchbook.com**.

PAY BASED ON HOW YOU WORK

The subscription must be renewed each year, unlike the in-app purchase, but you get access to the full tools on the versions of SketchBook for Windows, Mac and iOS as well as Android. Bear in mind that the desktop computer editions don't offer the one-off purchase option, only the subscription, so if you plan to use SketchBook on either Windows or Mac as well as Android, you may as well



You'll need either the Pro Tools or subscription version to use multiple layers in your art. The Free version limits you to just three layers.

An example of Chinese artist Weber Zhang's deft portrait art, created in SketchBook.

Tap near the centre-bottom of the screen to reveal a semi-circle of shortcuts, including restoring the previous brush and flipping the canvas.

"This release for Android maintains SketchBook's reputation as a quality, unobtrusive drawing tool"

forget the in-app purchase and commit to the subscription instead.

With all these complicated buying options, it's worth mentioning first that the Android app smoothly recognises your subscription when you first log in on the app; and second that once you've logged in, the app keeps all the Pro Tools active even if your tablet isn't connected to the internet.

The main differences your upgrade awards are customisable canvas sizes; dozens more brushes, including a Inking brush with a pleasing line quality; a limit to the number of layers dictated by your device's memory rather than the Free version's miserly three layers; the ability to make selections and masks; and unlimited Undos. You also get access to more drawing tools, including rulers and fills.

We also like the Predictive Stroke mode, which tidies up your line after you draw it. It's a real boon for digital inkers, and you can adjust the extent to which your lines will be altered.

This release brings SketchBook for Android up to speed with other versions and maintains the software's reputation as a quality, unobtrusive drawing tool. Perhaps more importantly for patient Android owners, the under-the-bonnet changes should see more contemporaneous updates across all SketchBook versions in the future.

DETAILS

Features

- Revamped user interface
- Over 130 brush presets (10 in Free edition)
- Unlimited layers (three in Free edition)
- Blending modes
- Selections and masks (not in the Free edition)
- Predictive Stroke mode (not in the Free edition)
- Timelapse animation (not in Free edition)
- Scan Sketches tool (limited size in the Free edition)

System Requirements
Tablet running Android 4.0.3 or later

Rating
★★★★☆

IN FOCUS

ANDROID ART APPS

Three more painting apps that you can use on your Android tablet

ArtRage

Web www.artrage.com
Price £4.29

This mobile edition features 15 painting tools focused around real-world media types, including watercolours, oils, pencils and an airbrush. You also enjoy access to image-editing staples including layers and blending modes.

Photoshop Sketch

Web www.adobe.com
Price Free

Perhaps more than in rival apps, Photoshop Sketch is about unlocking the potential of digital tools. Through a link-up with Adobe's Capture app, you can photograph a shape and then convert it into a brush.

ArtFlow

Web www.artflowstudio.com
Price Free; £1.99

Taking on the big guns of Autodesk and Adobe, ArtFlow is a fully fledged painting app created for Android tablets and phones. Access to more than 80 brushes is supported by infinite undo and up to 16,000 layers.

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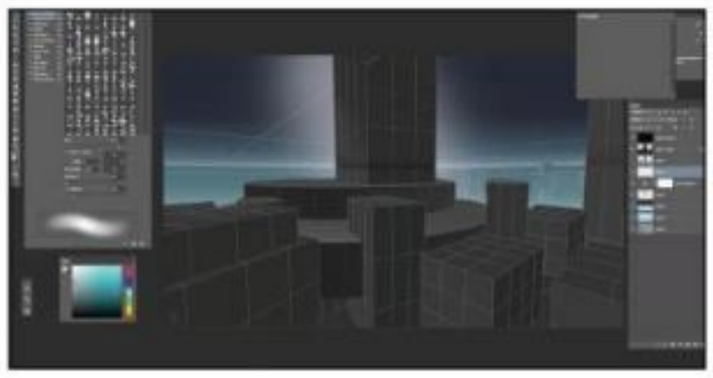

Rendering the 3D model as a wireframe on its own layer means that John can use it to keep his painting's perspective tight.

If the idea of painting a complex cityscape like this seems daunting, John Wallin Liberto's video breaks down the process.

Flying cars aren't just cool to paint: they convey scale within the scene and add a sense of narrative and movement.

Environment Concept Art

CITY SLICKER Concept artist John Wallin Liberto steps into the future with plenty of advice on how to paint a sci-fi cityscape

Publisher John Wallin Liberto **Price** $9 **Format** Download **Web** www.gumroad.com/johnliberto

An epic cityscape is a sure-fire way of evoking a futuristic populous, but they're deceptively difficult to paint well. The basic forms may be simple to set up, but the amount of detail you'll have to render can be overwhelming, making it tough to create an image detailed enough to convince viewers it's a city, yet composed in a way that makes everything easy to 'read'.

It's precisely this challenge that John Wallin Liberto takes on in this video, the latest in a set that he offers through the online marketplace Gumroad. He starts with what he calls a massout, which you may know as blocking out. This is a simple version of the scene, here modelled in 3D software. This enables John to export a wireframe version to help with perspective considerations as well as the basic lit scene.

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Massout
- Establishing values
- Photobashing
- Composition in complex scenes
- Rendering fog
- Light sources
- Balancing detail and legibility
- Maintaining correct perspective
- Storytelling within a cityscape

Length
190 minutes

Rating
★★★★☆

After establishing broad values to communicate depth, the bulk of the video is devoted to enhancing the initial shapes to add visual interest. John gives a great sense of the main issues you'll have to grapple with to convey your own cityscape successfully: as well as detailing, your light and ambience choices are crucial. You might be surprised by how much colour gets injected into an image that still seems to use a limited palette in its finished form, for example. You'll also learn a lot about rendering fog or mist: maintaining variety is key here.

After three hours, you'll have a solid foundation for tackling a complex scene like this, and you'll have picked up plenty of tips along the way – like the trick John uses to make rendering rooftop detail with the correct perspective a great deal easier. And you'll be dying to paint something with a flying car in it.

ARTIST PROFILE
JOHN WALLIN LIBERTO

John is a concept artist working at the virtual reality headset company Oculus VR. He's been involved in the video games industry since 1999 and has worked on AAA titles such as Halo 4 and 5, the Gears of War franchise and the Battlefield series of games. His film work has included Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban and Tim Burton's Big Fish. John's commercial client work has included Samsung, Intel and Nokia.

www.johnliberto.com

Jamie Hewlett

MONKEY BUSINESS Lose yourself in the work of the cult artist behind Gorillaz and Tank Girl, with this riotous career-so-far retrospective

ImagineFX ARTIST'S CHOICE

Author Jamie Hewlett **Publisher** Taschen **Price** £40 **Web** www.taschen.com

Many artists dream of finding huge mainstream success while staying true to themselves and their influences. Comic book artist and designer Jamie Hewlett is one of the few to pull this off more than once, with his crisp, energetic artwork shaping the look of counterculture for the last quarter of a century.

Thanks to the success of his first major strip, Tank Girl, and his design work for virtual band Gorillaz, Jamie's style has become one of the most recognisable and admired among both fellow artists and the public alike. And while these both get the attention they deserve in this chaotic collection, Taschen also sets aside a respectable number of pages to cover a diverse range of his other projects, some of which didn't see the light of day.

Russel and Noodle of Gorillaz fame in their recording studio, accompanied by a couple of hanger-oners.

The result is a collection with a suitably grab bag feel about it. With much of Jamie's work lost down the back of futons, stolen by editors or given to dealers, we're lucky to have what's presented here. "The book might be terrible, but it doesn't matter, it's just a book," jokes French fashion photographer Jean-Baptiste Mondino in the lighthearted introduction. "Life's more important, right?"

> **"Don't expect to learn too much… just sit back and let the book take you on a ride"**

This doesn't mean we're left with a substandard look back at the first 25 years of Jamie's career. What we get is a book of art that encompasses his versatile talents. Split into 12 sections, this hardback takes a irreverent approach that makes the reader feel at home in Jamie's anarchic worlds.

Each chapter kicks off with a short overview of the project in question, whether it's an exhibition of adult cinema-themed posters or pine tree illustrations, before presenting some of its choicest cuts. Readers can trace Jamie's development as an artist if they want, but don't expect to learn too much about how he works. Instead, it's best to just sit back and let the book take you on a ride.

Tank Girl strikes a pose. Jamie Hewlett created the character with a friend, Alan Martin, in the mid-80s.

Topping off the collection is a batch of sketches printed on transparent animation paper and a biography that hammers out the significant dates in Jamie's career. His work has acted as a gateway drug to other artists for a reason, so give your eyes a treat and check out this retrospective while you wait to see what Jamie does next.

RATING ★★★★★

The Ultimate Concept Art Career Guide

CAREER ADVISERS Experienced artists lead you through the world of concept art and explain what it takes to succeed in the industry

Author James Paick **Publisher** 3dtotal Publishing **Price** £20 **Web** www.3dtotalpublishing.com

Many of our readers would say that working in the concept art industry is the perfect job. The relatively new discipline draws together a lot of creative skills and challenges, which creative director James Paick demystifies in this guide.

Split into four main chapters, this 200-page book outlines just what concept art is, how to get into it, and what to expect from working in the industry. Each section features artist profiles and multiple authors, and gives readers a rounded idea of how to make it as a concept artist.

Rudy Siswanto's satyr baby beast art. Rudy's carved out a full-time freelance career working for the likes of Riot Games and Wizards of the Coast.

The expert artists share words of wisdom that readers would do well to follow, and it'll come as some reassurance that there doesn't appear to be one set career path for a concept artist. Occasionally, we wish the advice dug a little deeper, as sometimes it's so basic as to be impractical. As a primer though, this guide does a solid job of giving you an overview of the landscape. Artists with even a smidgen of experience are likely to be familiar with a lot of the guidance, but for students or those looking for a creative career change, this guide is a quick, useful read.

RATING ★★★★☆

Martin Deschambault: Project 77

WORLD BUILDER Take a trip to the cut-throat world of Project 77, in this book of passion-project design and concept art

Author Martin Deschambault **Publisher** ArtStation Media **Price** £34 **Web** www.artstationmedia.com

Ever since a young Martin Deschambault was given a copy of From Star Wars to Indiana Jones: The Best of the Lucasfilm Archives, he knew that he had to design sci-fi universes. So in 2011 Martin started work on Project 77, a personal project that saw him creating his own imaginary worlds.

Developed over six years alongside his day job in the video games industry, Project 77 presents an array of fantastic character, environment and vehicle art that showcases Martin's talents as a concept artist. Opening with a foreword by Sparth, the bulk of the book features character-based chapters introduced with vignettes by Jeffrey Campbell. Frustratingly, the artwork – though atmospheric in its own right – lacks captions that further explain this alien world to us.

A lone rider surveys the bleak, terraformed surface of Vesp.

Martin closes the book with six tutorials that give an insight into his creative process, and an interview on how Project 77 evolved. There's a clarity in his writing in these later sections that would have been appreciated earlier on, as there's nobody better positioned to reveal this fictional world than Martin himself. The art, though, is a strong example of a skilled imagination in action that's sure to encourage other concept artists.

RATING ★★★☆☆

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Workshops assets are available...
If you see the video workshop badge then you can watch the artist in action. Turn to page 6 to see how you can get hold of the video.

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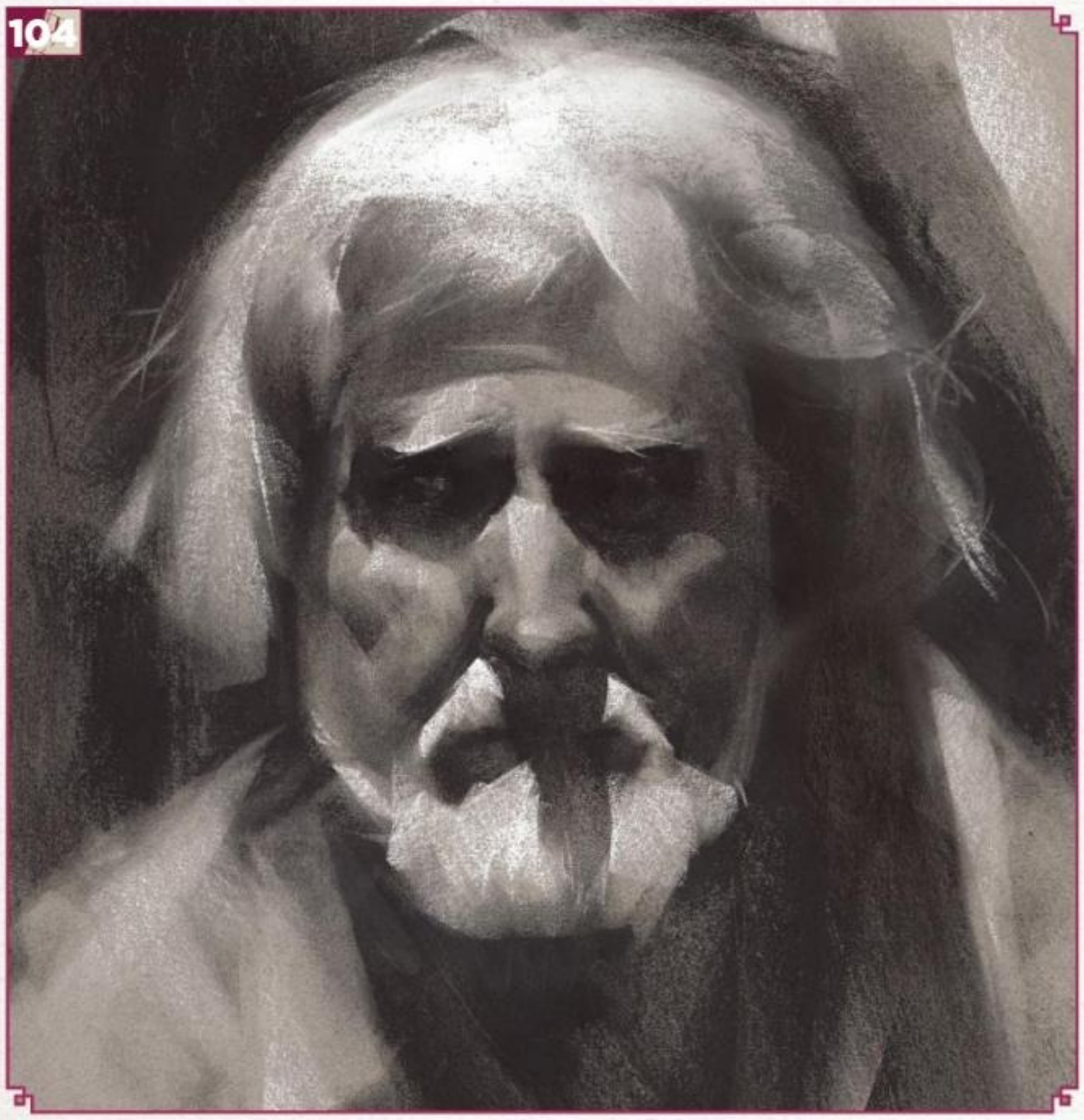
Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists



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100 Traditional art FXPosé
Artwork from some of the finest traditional artists around today.

104 Workshop: The values of light and shadow
Nathan Fowkes' fundamental lighting advice will ensure that your portrait pieces have a greater sense of depth and belonging.

110 Core Skills: plein air
Make sure you've got the right equipment for painting outdoors. Christopher Moeller runs through the bare essentials.

114 First impressions: Jennifer Healy
This artist tells us how the effects of her difficult childhood can be observed in her work.

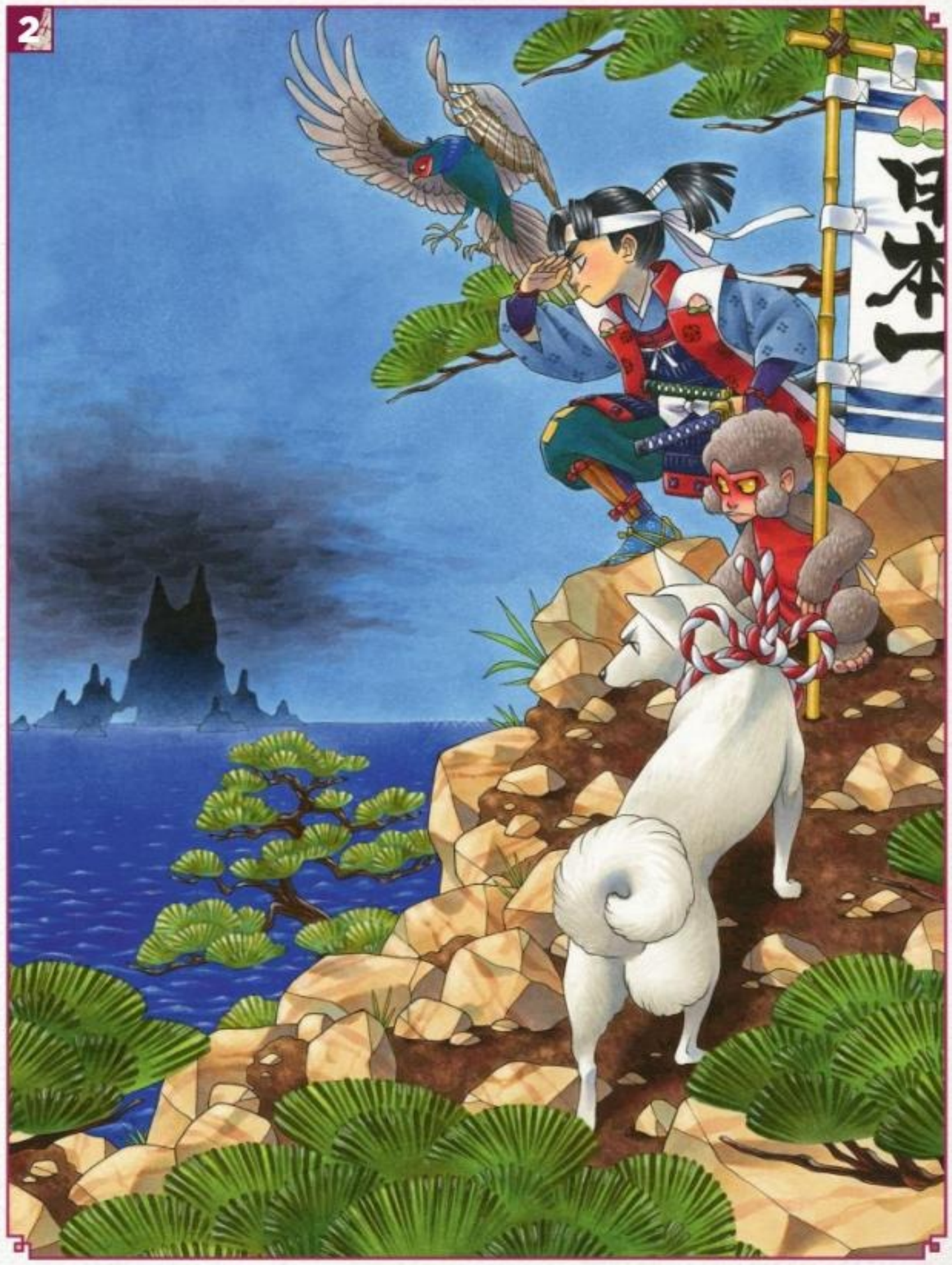
FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS

Anne Chihiro Howe

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Copic markers **WEB:** www.facebook.com/chihirohowe

Anne's art features elements of two of her childhood loves: manga and Disney. "I try to use bright colours and positive moods for my drawings," she explains.



1 MIDORI NO TANUKI
"The name and inspiration for this drawing came from a brand of popular Japanese cup noodles, and also a maiko, which is a traditional Japanese dancer from Kyoto."

2 MOMOTARO
"A scene from a Japanese folktale, Momotarō (Peach Boy). I wanted the focus to be on Onigashima (Ogre Island), so I framed it with the characters and the trees."

3 THE MAGICIAN
"A drawing I did to try out a new paper. I wanted to do something with dramatic lighting, so I came up with this magician character in the middle of a show."

4
4 EAST MEETS WEST
"I wanted to use the desert as a background, so I made up a story about a samurai travelling to the American Old West and meeting a cowgirl."

1
Atria

Asia Ladowska

LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Copic markers **WEB:** www.instagram.com/Ladowska

Asia works full-time as a designer, but prefers to spend her nights doodling with Copic markers. "I'm madly in love with Japanese manga and anime-style art," she reveals.

1 WISH
"This delicate drawing has a bit of a creepy vibe to it. Not all wishes are good and pure; sometimes we wish for something we shouldn't."

2 BUTTERFLIES
"I drew this on my first ever Instagram live stream as a 'thank you' when I reached half a million followers."

3 HARLEY QUINN
"Instead of Harley Quinn's crazy villain look, I wanted her to appear sad and nostalgic. I thought depicting her as an anime figure would make her cuter!"

4 RAVENS
"These are two personal works I did as part of a Copic marker art trade with a great friend of mine, who's also an extremely talented artist: Warren Louw, a past cover artist for ImagineFX."

Fancy sharing your traditional art with your fellow readers? Then email five pieces of your work and a short explanation about each one, along with a photo and a few details about yourself, to **fxpose@imaginefx.com**

Charcoal

THE VALUES OF LIGHT AND SHADOW

NATHAN FOWKES, an artist working in the animation industry, reveals how the correct depiction of light and shade can bring greater depth to any portrait piece

My professional work as an animation artist calls for a strong understanding of light and shadow. Indeed, it's one of the most important skills in my toolbox. I need to have a technical understanding of how light works so that I can give a believability to the scenes that I create.

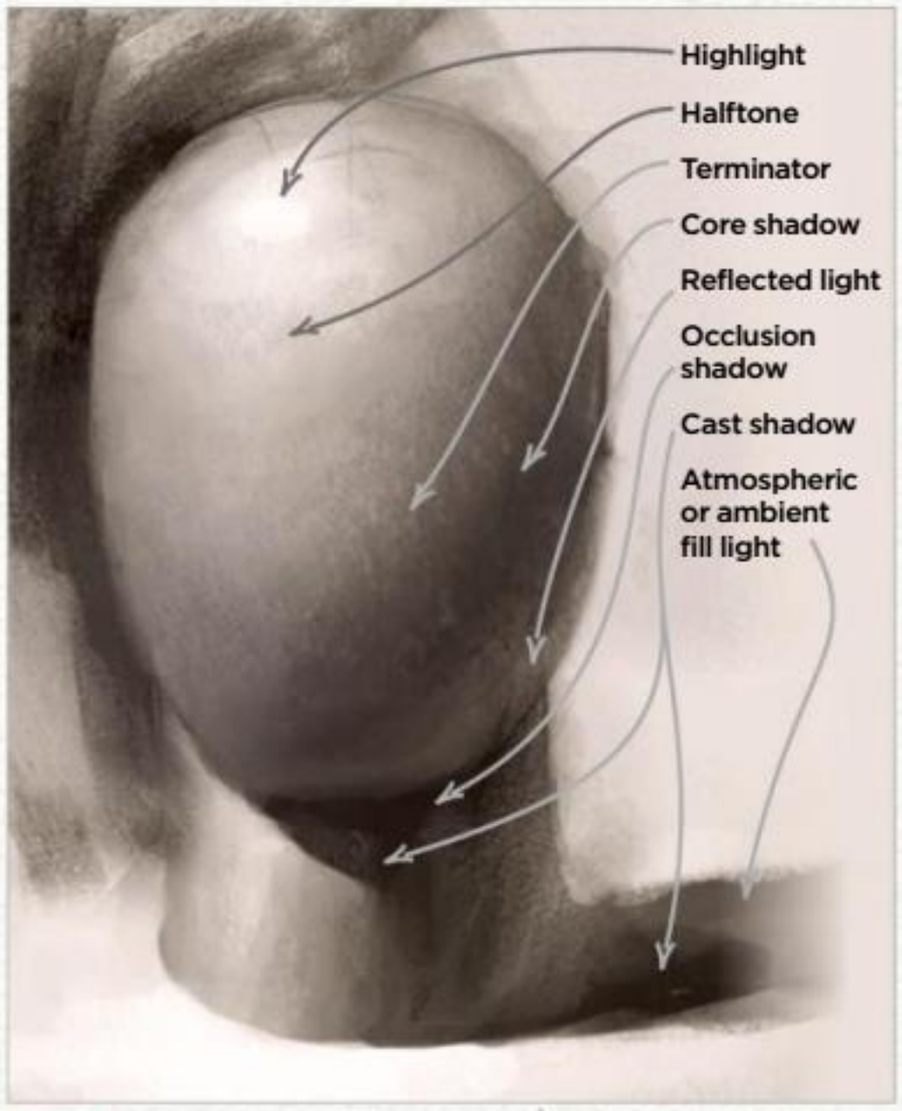
Passages of light and shadow can be designed to give special emphasis to each moment of a film. Vibrant contrasts of light can convey an exciting energy, while nuances of light can create subtle mood changes. In the end, light is everything. We can't visually perceive the world without it, and so it behooves us to understand it.

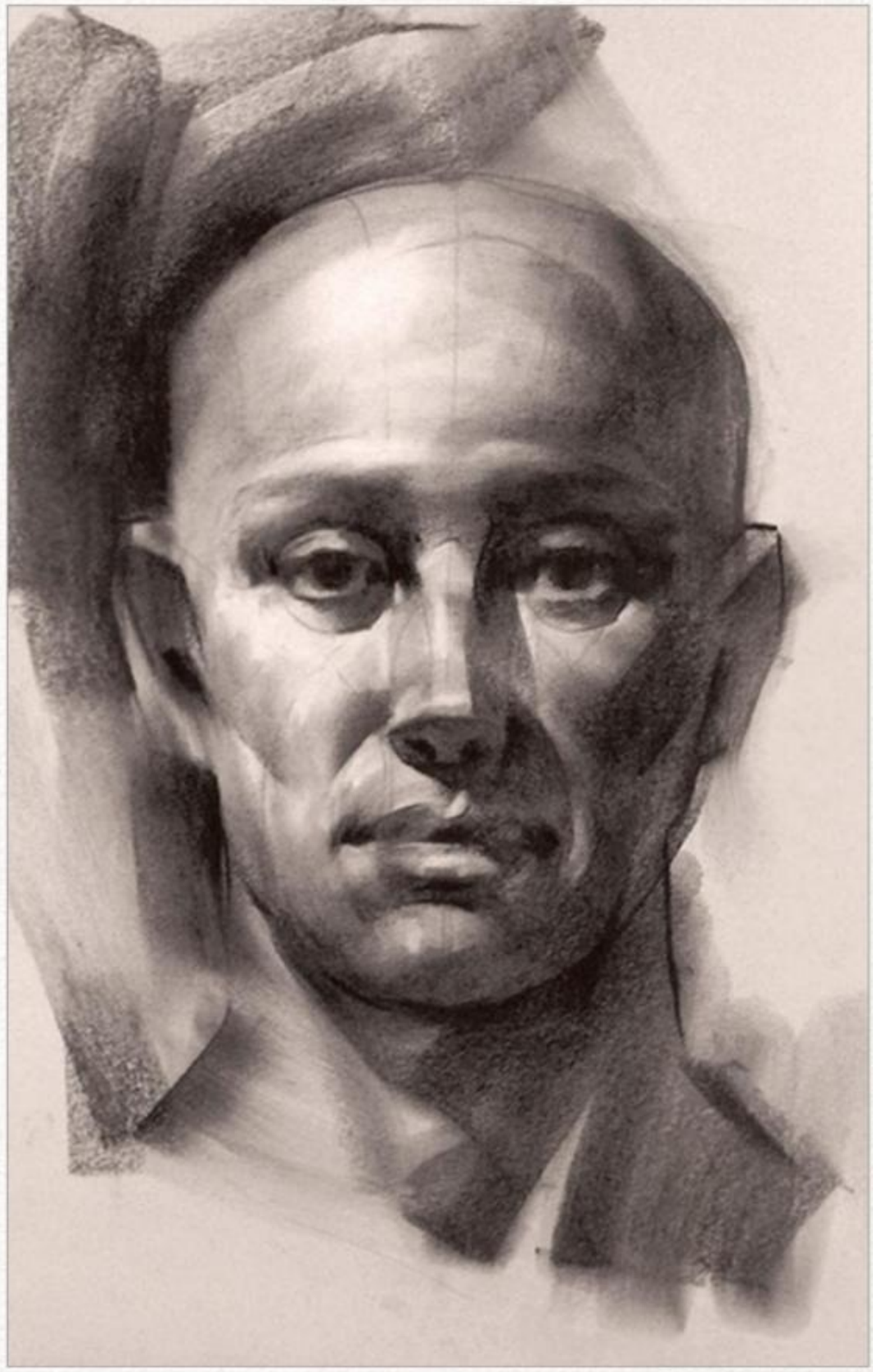
Light and shadow can bring the same level of artistry and storytelling to our portrait drawings. Long before I began working in film, my understanding of light developed through observational drawing. The study of light on form has been key to everything I do as an artist. In this workshop we'll explore how to use light and shadow to convey form.

READER OFFER!
See right on how to save 25 per cent off this book!

This workshop is courtesy of Nathan Fowkes from How to Draw Portraits in Charcoal, Design Studio Press. Readers can get 25% off (not including limited edition books) with the code 'ImagineFX' at www.designstudiopress.com.

Light and shadow terminology

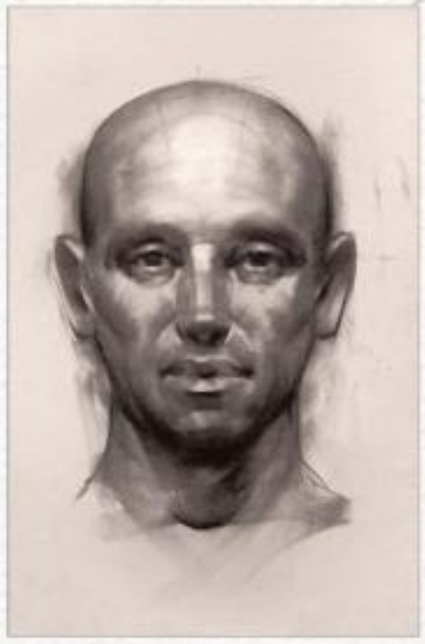




1 *Direct light source*

After reviewing the egg diagram (above), examine the generic light-and-shadow head (right). Notice how each major protuberance of the head is like a mini version of our simple diagram. For instance, take a look at the nose: it has a highlight, halftone, core shadow, reflected light and cast shadow. Now analyse the chin, the lower lip, the cheek and the forehead: each has the same quality of light and shadow. Even the eye, as it protrudes out of its socket, can be treated the way a simple sphere reacts to light. When you learn to observe these simple relationships of light and shadow, rendering form becomes relatively straightforward.

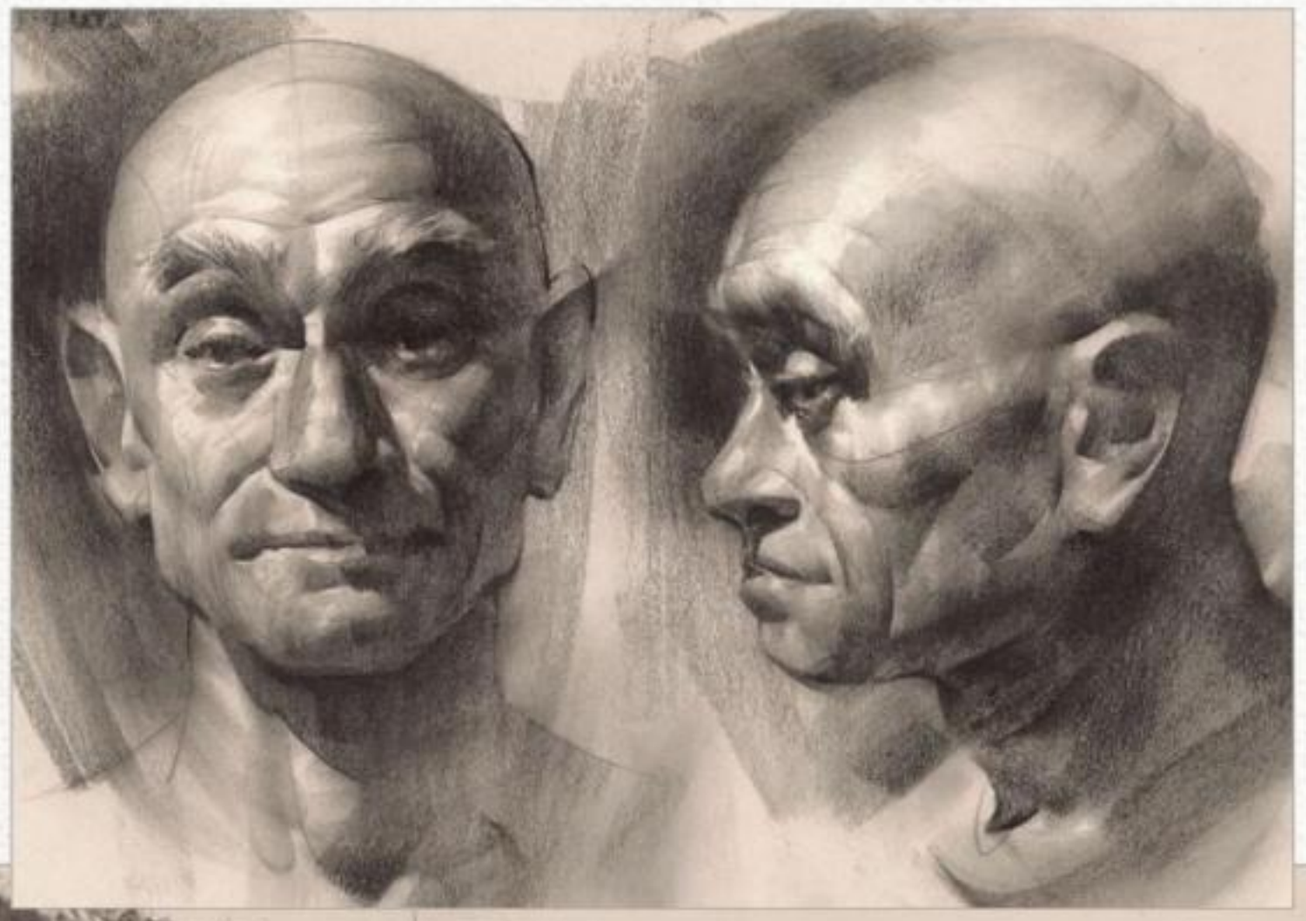
“Even the eye, as it protrudes out of its socket, can be treated the way a sphere reacts to light”



2 *Ambient light*

Common sources of ambient light are indirect window light or outdoor lighting on an overcast day. This type of lighting is potentially even simpler than direct light: forms curve away from the light source into shadow, and cast shadows are soft edged and diffuse.

Because electric lighting is relatively recent, there’s a long tradition of portraits painted under ambient light sources. Standard practice was to place the portrait subject in the light of a north-facing window, which would maintain a consistent level of illumination for many hours during the day. Even today, many portrait artists prefer the soft quality of ambient lighting for a sensitive rendering of their subjects.



3 *Identify the masses of light and shadow*

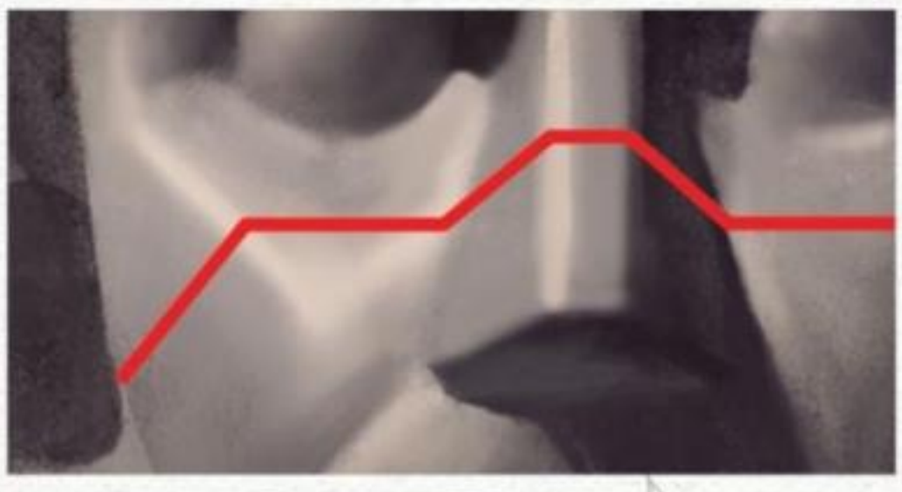
The next important simplification is to organise the head into clear, committed masses of light and shadow. As a drawing teacher I've found that new students nearly always look at individual contrasts of anatomy as they draw, rather than noticing the bigger, simpler masses of light and shadow. The results are bumpy, overwrought anatomy that starts to look more like a sack of walnuts than like a human head.

So before we ever start rendering the nuances of light and shadow, I ask students to identify and commit to the simple masses of light and shadow. They also have to look for and emphasise the quality of the shadow edge. For instance, cast shadows tend to have a hard edge, and turning forms tend to have a soft, blended edge. If we emphasise this simple statement of light and shadow in our portraits before we render nuances, we're more likely to end up with strong forms and an accurate likeness.

The importance of highlights

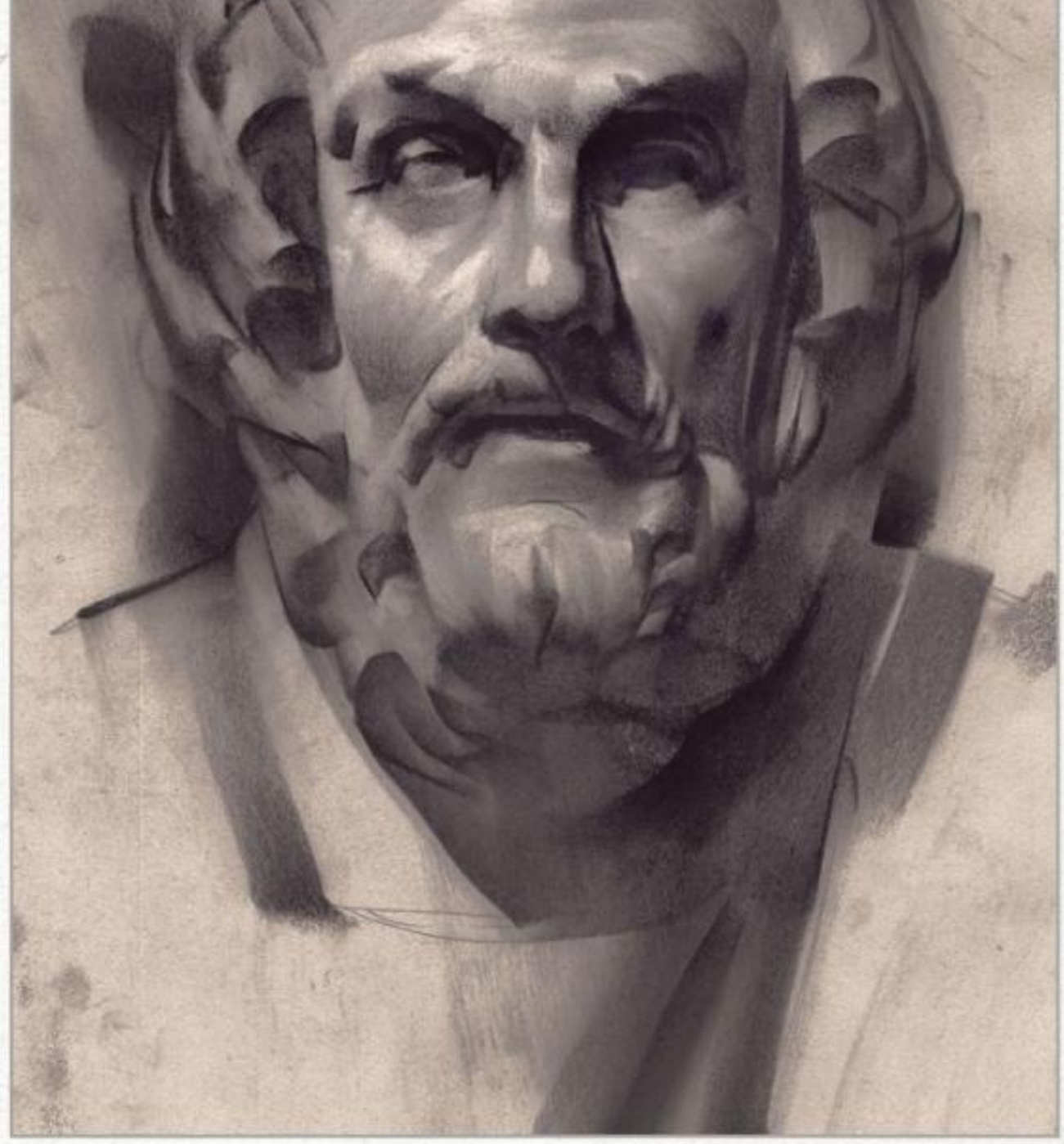
1 Highlights emphasise form

Examine the highlights in the drawing of this plaster cast (right). See how they tend to fall at the crest of each form facing the light? The placement of highlights is critical to show turning forms. Pictured above is a simplified version of the face to show how the highlights describe the curving forms. The highlights tend to fall on the corners between the large planes of the head.



2 Notice where planes meet

The red-lined diagram shows the side plane and front plane of the cheek, with the highlight falling where they meet. It's the same with the nose: the highlight falls along the edge where the side plane and the front plane meet. Whenever you're struggling with creating clear form in your drawings, fall back on this simple quality of highlights. Even if you end up exaggerating what you see, you're telling the little white lie to convey a greater truth.



3 Balancing what you see and what you need to draw

In these two drawings, the woman on the left is primarily in shadow and the woman on the right is primarily in light. When I was drawing the woman on the left my eyes could perceive a great deal of value range. But I knew if I tried to render every subtlety, not only would it take too long but the masses of light and shadow would be broken up and confusing. I had to decide what to emphasise about my subject and what to edit.

4 Lighting decisions

I decided that the rim light on the left-hand face should be pushed into a narrow range of brightness so that I would have the rest of the value range to render subtleties on the shadow side of the face. The value chart below the drawing shows the break between light and shadow. The result is a clearer, more committed drawing.

5 Halftone possibilities

For the right-hand drawing, I was interested in the subtleties of character and form created by the halftone lights. This led me to make the decision to push all the shadows into a very narrow dark range, as seen in the lower part of the value graph. That choice opened up a wide range of tone to render strong form and character in the light.

Focusing on the values of light and shadow

1 *Establish the basics*

Let's now convey clear form and character through the values of light and shadow. Here's our standard construction drawing approach. Its goal is to establish the head's simple forms, planes and three-dimensional nature.

2 *Construction guidelines*

I keep my values as simple as possible by massing them only in the shadow shapes and the darks of the hair. I'm using my construction lines to make sure that each stroke properly curves around the form.

3 *Depict halftones*

Now I drag tone from the shadows and pull it around the forms of the face to convey the halftones. Notice that my strokes are still carefully following the direction of my construction lines, which were laid down earlier.

4 *Refining the portrait*

With the big simple statement of light and shadow in place, I'm ready to refine my drawing. I add sharpness to the cast shadows, greater definition to the hair and features, and I use the kneaded eraser to pull out highlights. And we're finished!

Core skills: Part 3

PLEIN AIR: GEAR UP FOR GOING OUTSIDE

"Be prepared" is the motto for any plein air painting trip, and in this month's instalment CHRISTOPHER MOELLER takes you through the equipment you'll need

Once you're ready to give plein air painting a try, what do you need to get started? First of all, understand that any medium you use in the studio can be brought into the outdoors. That includes digital, pastel, acrylic… you name it. Plein air painting has historically been the domain of oil painters (think Monet and company), so let's use that as a starting point.

Painting outside is like camping: it requires some advanced preparation. In the studio, everything you need is within arm's reach. But once outside, it's amazing how often you realise you've forgotten some trifling item that brings your expedition to a screeching halt. My most common plein air screw-up is forgetting to bring a plastic grocery bag to put my dirty rags in. I can't count the times I've been caught with nowhere to put my first handful of oily paper towels.

So the first thing you want to do is to assemble a plein air "kit" with everything you need. It doesn't need to be fancy, and you'll tweak it to suit your own style of working as you go.

One thing I do suggest is that you institute a "coming home" ritual for yourself: clean your brushes and palette, replace used-up paint, restock your rubbish bags. The next time you decide to escape from the studio, you'll be ready to go there and then.

Christopher's a writer and painter who specialises in producing fully painted graphic novels. See more of his art at www.moellerillustrations.com.

1 *The plein air equipment basics*

Let's start with the obvious items: primed panel or canvas, tubes of paint, solvent, a set of brushes and an easel. You'll also want a backpack to put it all in, and if, like me you prefer to paint sitting down, a lightweight chair.

My preferred surfaces for plein air painting are primed masonite boards or canvas panels. They're rugged, lightweight and easy to transport.

I have two of these rolls: one for my long-handled flats and brights, and another for small watercolour rounds.

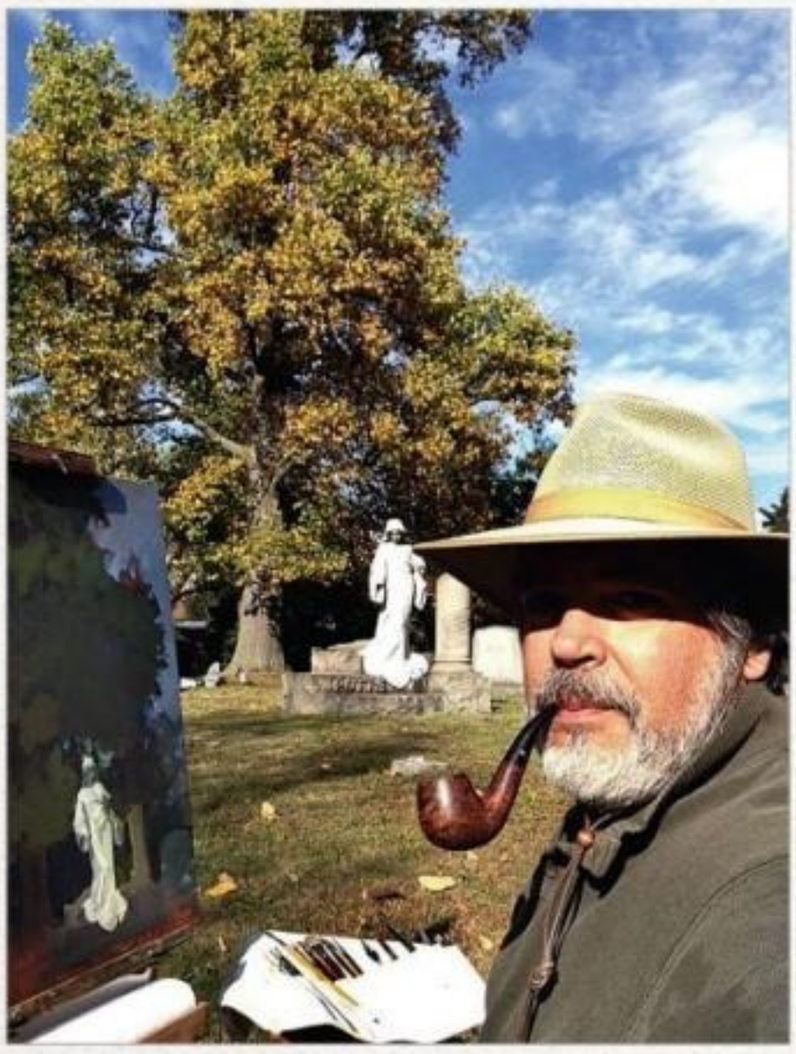
This container has a lid for storing solvents.

For sunny or rainy days, a painter's umbrella is a wonderful tool. I don't use it every time I paint, but on those days when it's needed, it's a treasure.

An assortment of less-obvious items: clips (always handy), a mirror for checking accuracy while painting, and a ground cloth (useful for fending off ticks in high grass, or on muddy days).

2 *Remembering the less-obvious items*

Bear in mind the camping analogy, and pack some paper towels, bug spray and sunscreen. You'll need a box for carrying wet paintings and plastic grocery bags for putting dirty rags in. Pencils and a sketchbook are a must.



3 *There's all sorts of weather out there*

Something else your studio has that nature doesn't is heat in the winter and air conditioning in the summer. Again, think camping. You'll want gloves, a hat with a brim, rain gear and solid, comfortable shoes.

The far-left photo was taken on an SPF 100 sunscreen day. Hat and pipe remain mandatory. At the other end of the spectrum, some of my most satisfying adventures have been in the winter (left). When it's really bitter, I put hand warmers in my gloves, boots and under my hat!

4 *Mobility*

Because not everything you want to paint is accessible by car, it's a good idea to give some thought to carrying your gear. When you're hiking over rough ground, weight and compactness becomes an issue. It's harder to climb over rocks carrying plastic grocery bags than a study backpack.

A good backpack is the centre of your painting kit, where all of the odds and ends live. Look for one with a zippered back, so that it lays flat when opened.

My most unusual bit of gear is this bike trailer. I've used it several times to revisit places I've seen while on the trail.

GEAR TIP

PREPARATION HELPS

Painting outdoors means bringing everything with you. So identify the essentials, and what you can afford to leave in the studio.

5 *Choose your easel*

As plein air painting grows in popularity, so do the available options, particularly regarding easels. There's a dizzying array of choices, from the time-tested French easel, to the pochade box, to the lightweight backpacking easel. Don't be intimidated: there's no wrong choice and you don't need to start with anything fancy.

TOOL TIP

BE FLEXIBLE

Don't worry if you forget something. Being forced to stretch because you forgot your white paint can take your art to new places!

The pochade box come in a variety of sizes, and attaches to a photographer's tripod. They're built with an optimal painting size in mind, such as 9x12 inches. You can work at other sizes, but at the optimal size the box doubles as a painting carrier, enabling you to carry two or three wet paintings inside the box. You can also store your paints in them.

The French easel's great advantage is that it can accommodate large paintings. Like the pochade box, it enables you to store brushes and paints inside its sliding door. One disadvantage is that it's relatively bulky and fiddly to set up.

There are a number of lightweight easels on the market. This is painter Josh Clare's Strada easel. It's great for travelling by plane or backpack. Note that they can be unstable on windy days.

First Impressions

Jennifer Healy

Discover the discomforting driving force behind much of this artist's work

Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?
I grew up in Caddo parish, Louisiana. I think it has influenced my art a bit in a sense that I've grown accustomed to swamp vibes, bones and anything that provides soul.

But as far as the house I grew up in, I think that's what has affected my art the most. I grew up in an extremely violent and abusive home. To this day, it seeps through my everyday living, and most definitely, my artwork.

You're a child, you see a painting that changes everything… where are you and what are you looking at, and what effect did it have?
I was sitting in class. I don't remember what grade, or how old I was, but it was Van Gough's self-portrait. I remember staring at his face, and even though the colours were so vibrant and happy, there was a sadness to the overall piece. I think that's what hit me the most: that I could relate to a single painting. I knew then that that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to leave behind art that would someday reach an individual who was like me. Struggling with life, but given hope in some form or another.

OPAL
"This portrait is painted in soft muted hues, using watercolours."

PERSEVERANCE
"I completed this using coloured pencils. It depicts the struggles of dealing with C-PTSD."

> **"I wanted to leave behind art that would someday reach an individual who was like me"**

Does one person stand out as being helpful during your early years?
In high school, I took a small watercolour class. My teacher's name was Mrs Christian. She never tried to steer me away from whatever weird drawing or painting I had presented to her. And I painted some strange things, too. She always encouraged me, and was a huge influence in my confidence in my artwork.

Tell us about your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your artistic talent?
I've always noticed a difference in my commission work and my personal pieces. I think that they're very different.

What's the last piece that you finished, and how do the two artworks differ?
My last piece is of a geode jellyfish, with orchids for the tentacles. My first commissioned piece was of my client's personal character. That in itself explains how different they are, but another huge difference is that the commission was painted digitally, while the latest piece was painted traditionally.

Is making a living as an artist all you thought it would be?
It has its amazing moments, but it can be very difficult as well. Either way, I love doing what I do.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?
To keep trying. To keep doing what I love, even in those trying times where it all seemed pointless.

What character or scene that you've painted do you most identify with?
My traditional piece Perseverance. I deal with C-PTSD from my childhood traumas, so this particular piece represents how imprisoning that can be, but how I continue to fight. The flowers represent new growth, and how there's still beauty in life.

What does the future hold for you?
I honestly have no idea, but I do know I'm hopeful!

Jennifer started her passion for art in elementary school as an attempt to escape from an abusive childhood. She likes to combine beautiful and ugly aspects of life in her work. Art was, and is, a way of life. You can discover more of her art at www.jennifer-healy.com.

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